



Thursday, December 22, 2016

Read by more than 46,000 people

Price when sold 60p

# MOTORISTS FACE MAJOR DELAYS

Report by Richard Guttridge

**DRIVERS** are facing roadworks misery with busy routes hit by delays due to temporary traffic lights and long detours.

Motorists on a main road running through Rowley Regis are hardest hit with roadworks set to last for months.

Temporary traffic lights will go up on Doulton Road during the first week of the new year as work is carried out to connect 200 new homes to gas, water and electricity supplies.

The work, being done by utility companies, will get under way on January 3 and will also cause disruption for residents.

The connections will supply new homes being built by developers Kier Homes, Countryside and Smart Build Solutions on Doulton Road and another small development of two homes on Dudley Road.

Sandwell Council's roads boss Councillor David Hossell said: "These are essential works to connect these new homes to water, sewers, gas and electricity supplies.

"We really need new homes built in Sandwell but with that comes the job of connecting these sites up to utilities. This will cause some inconvenience in the area and I'd ask people to be patient. It's something that is unavoidable.

"I am sure the utility companies and their contractors will make sure this work as swiftly as they can, but it's a big job."

## Hospital

The largest development is to build 188 homes on a former haulage firm site off Doulton Road, a mix of properties over 12.8 acres of land.

Meanwhile, carriageway reconstruction work will be taking place on the B4179 Commonside in Pensnett from the first week of January, forcing traffic heading south to be diverted past Russells Hall Hospital.

A temporary one-way system will come into force on a route already often clogged with traffic heading towards Merry Hill shopping centre.

The one-way system will be running between 9.30am and 3.30pm and is scheduled to be in place for three weeks.

The area where work will take place will stretch from Corbys Hall Road down to Bryce Road.

Motorists have been advised to give themselves more time for their journeys or consider finding another route.

Dudley Council said the work had been planned outside peak times in order to create as little disruption as possible.

Bosses said clear diversion signs would be in place to guide motorists.

Pensnett councillor Karen Jordan warned that the work would cause significant disruption in the area.

Work is also taking place this weekend on Birmingham New Road near Shaw Road.

## BIKERS HELP SANTA DELIVER FOR YOUNG PATIENTS



Halesowen boy Henry Torrington, six, who has been a patient at the children's hospital, was supporting the toy run with his father Lee at Streetbike.

BIKERS took to the streets of Halesowen and Birmingham to donate toys and essential items to ill youngsters and their families.

A total of 300 bikers from across the West Midlands came together on Sunday to present patients at Birmingham Children's Hospital with Christmas presents.

Riders dressed up as elves, reindeer, snowmen and even Santa to travel from Streetbike, on Dudley Road, Halesowen, to Ronald McDonald House on St Mary's Row in Birmingham.

The bikers were joined by motorcycle stars,

former British Superbike champion John Reynolds, and paramedic Steve Harris, who led the convoy.

Gary Marshall, owner and director of Streetbike said: "The ride out went very well. The aim of the event was not only to make sure that children at Birmingham Children's Hospital received a present but that Ronald McDonald House also got the basic every day essentials.

"We took two vans piled high with toys as well as basics like tea and coffee to the children and their families."

Stewart Boggild, one of the organisers of the event, said it had been fantastic day.

"To see the smiles on the children's faces when we arrived, that makes it all worthwhile," he said. "I think we had the whole of Birmingham out there and cheering us on when we turned up."

The organisers are already looking forward to their next charity event.

Mr Boggild said: "You'll absolutely see us again soon."

"We'll be organising the Easter Egg run next year, so watch this space for that."

## APPEAL

Generous readers donate 8,500 items

AN INCREDIBLE 8,500 food items and toiletries have been donated to the Express & Star's Feed a Family This Christmas appeal.

The Chronicle's sister newspaper has been overwhelmed by the kindness of people across the Black Country and Staffordshire who have dug deep to help those less fortunate.

Donations of festive treats and other produce have flooded in since the appeal was launched five weeks ago. Every item will go towards helping families to put a substantial meal on the table this Christmas.

## HEALTH

Care partners get extra £4m boost

A £4.3 million cash boost has been awarded to Dudley's clinical commissioning group to further improve health and social care in the borough.

The money will be awarded to the All Together Better partnership which is a national programme made up of health and social care organisations.

The 'vanguard' programme aims to deliver improved outcomes by improving the access to, and continuity of, care through the integration of services around the patient and GP practice.

## COUNCIL

Tory boss opposes leisure centre move

DUDLEY Council's plan to close three leisure centres and build two new facilities could be in doubt after opposition councillors suggested they may not back it.

The controversial proposals have been met with a public backlash with more than 2,500 people signing a petition calling to save the centres in Dudley, Stourbridge and Halesowen.

The council's bid to have just two new leisure centres serving the borough, on Flood Street and in Lye, would need support of some opposition councillors but Tory group leader Councillor Patrick Harley insists the borough has three centres.

*Merry Christmas  
To All Our Readers*

## Winter Sale

Quality Installations No Deposit Required

FULL PAYMENT ON COMPLETION

FREE ESTIMATES AND HOME VISITS

### SPECIAL OFFER

#### FOR THE LESS ABLE

Remove Existing Bath  
Replaster where needed  
Supply Wall in Cubicle  
Grab Rails,  
Shower Seat  
Thermostatic Shower  
All fitted & Tiled  
All Rubbish removed

ONLY £1895  
including VAT

### SPECIAL OFFER

#### LUXURY MAKEOVER

Remove Existing Bath  
Replaster where needed  
Supply & Fit Luxury  
Suite (inc. Vanity Unit)  
Wall Tiles to Ceiling  
(up to 8 sqm)  
All Rubbish Removed

ONLY £2995  
including VAT

**DB PROPERTY MAINTENANCE**  
KITCHENS & BATHROOMS

Fully Fitted Kitchens from £4,995  
FREE DESIGN AND PLANNING

Call Dan on : 0121 647 3585  
[www.db-maintenance.co.uk](http://www.db-maintenance.co.uk)

|                 |         |
|-----------------|---------|
| MARK ANDREWS    | 6       |
| LETTERS         | 7       |
| MEMORY LANE     | 10      |
| THE FAST TICKET | 21      |
| PANTO REVIEW    | 22      |
| PUZZLES         | 29      |
| MOTORING        | 33      |
| SPORT           | 35 & 36 |
| CONTACT US      |         |

EDITORIAL:  
Tel: 01384 353201/01384 353205  
E-mail: dudley.chrons@expressandstar.co.uk

SPORTS:  
Tel: 01902 319453  
E-mail: chron.sport@expressandstar.co.uk

PHOTOGRAPHIC: Tel: 01902 319430  
E-mail: picturedesk@expressandstar.co.uk

ADVERTISING: Nicola Cope

Tel: 01902 319573  
E-mail: nicola.cope@expressandstar.co.uk

PROPERTY: Colin Bailey

Tel: 01902 313131 ext 3731  
E-mail: colin.bailey@expressandstar.co.uk

MOTORING: Liz Barratt

Tel: 01384 353244  
E-mail: liz.barratt@expressandstar.co.uk

CLASSIFIED:  
Tel: 01902 317878  
E-mail: my-classified@expressandstar.co.uk

DISTRIBUTION: Paul Jones

Tel: 01902 319990  
E-mail: p.jones@expressandstar.co.uk

Halesowen Chronicle

51-53 Queen Street  
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES  
Open Monday to Friday 9am-1pm and 2pm-5pm  
[www.yourchronicle.com](http://www.yourchronicle.com)

DON'T MISS YOUR  
**Express & Star**

EVERY DAY  
**PETER RHODES**

The man  
who takes  
a sideways  
look at life

EVERY SATURDAY  
**NIGEL HASTILOW**

He always  
tackles the  
hot topics  
head-on

# Hospital trust appoints chief executive



New hospital boss Diane Wake

THE trust which runs Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital has announced the appointment of a new chief executive.

Diane Wake will take on the top job, joining the Dudley Group NHS Trust from a similar role in Barnsley.

She will replace Paula Clark, who announced she was quitting as chief executive in August to take over at crisis-hit Stafford County Hospital.

Ms Wake will start work in the post in April. She has been chief executive at the Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust for three years and previously held a senior role in Liverpool.

Ms Wake said: "I am thrilled at the appointment and look forward to making a difference for the patients of Dudley and surrounding areas."

"I am passionate about making local services right for people and in Dudley there are lots of opportunities to do just that."

"Working with GPs and other local providers to develop the Multi-speciality Community Provider services will result in ground-breaking changes to the way services are accessed and coordinated for patients and their families."

"At the same time, together with my

executive team, we will ensure that hospital services continue to perform amongst the best in the country and are sustainable longer term."

"I am looking forward to meeting as many staff as possible and working with the council of Governors to make sure patients and the public's voices are heard at the board and used to make a difference to services."

Standards at Russells Hall improved dramatically under the guidance of Ms Clark as it became one of the best performing hospitals in the country in some areas of service.

# Drug addict charity box thief is put behind bars

A DRUG addict who stole charity collection boxes, broke into the same pub twice and used someone else's bank card to buy booze has been jailed.

Wolverhampton Crown Court heard that Wayne Ball targeted The Cave pub in Dudley while it was being renovated. The 32-year-old went on to snatch collection boxes from a Your Local Express, containing £250, before being tracked down after being pictured on CCTV.

Ball, from Swancotes Road, Dudley, pleaded guilty to two counts of burglary, three counts of fraud, one count of handling stolen goods, one count of theft and one of cannabis possession. He was given three-and-a-half years in prison.

The burglary charges relate to two separate incidents where he broke into The Cave pub in Wren's Hill Road, in which he stole a plate compactor tool, 60 inch TV and caused damage. He had been given a suspended sentence after the first incident.

Prosecuting, Sati Ruck, said: "The stolen card he used to purchase alcohol – which he then sold for drug money – was taken during a house robbery which he says he had no part in. He claims to have found the card in an alleyway near the house."

Defending Ball, Estelle Thornber said he had been suffering with addictions to crack cocaine and heroin.

Handing Ball a jail sentence, Judge Nicholas Webb told him: "You were given another chance after breaking into The Cave the first time, but just five days later you're doing the same thing."

# Return of the age of the train as more travel

THE number of people catching trains across the Black Country and Staffordshire has increased by nearly seven per cent in the last year.

There were 20.375 million 'entries and exits' at stations across the region in 2015/16, up from 19.081 million the year before.

Of the region's 33 railway stations, just three saw their overall visitors decline during that time. According to the estimates of the usage by the Office of Rail and Road, Wolverhampton railway station, which is operated by Virgin Trains, saw 4,746m visitors in 2015/16 – an increase of 5.6 per cent from 2014/15's total of 4,495m.

Dudley's busiest station, Stourbridge Junction, saw an increase to 1,434m. It rose from 1,323m and showed an 8.3 per cent rise.

Rowley Regis, which was the busiest in Sandwell, was used by 1,015m passengers after 921,116 people used it in 2014/15. People using Walsall rose to 1,404m from 1,303m in 2014/15 – a 7.7 per cent increase.

Steve Wright from independent campaign group Railfuture said: "We are very enthusiastic about rail in the West Midlands and it is generally accepted that the growth in the West Midlands is growing more quickly than anywhere else in the country."

## Franchise

"We are looking forward to the next franchise, which is due in July next year for October next year. That may see some significant improvements in frequency."

He said the pressure group is 'actively campaigning' to see a line reopened between Walsall and Wolverhampton. London Midland operates all the stations in the Black Country and Staffordshire, other than Wolverhampton and Stafford.

Its spokesman Francis Thomas said: "We have seen phenomenal growth in the last eight years since the franchise began." Seventy-five million people travel with us every year across the London Midland network and we have invested over £100m in that time and demand has grown."

The busiest station outside London was Birmingham New Street, with just over 39m people using it.

## Paige design winner



Imaginative young Paige Oliver has won the Halesowen Chronicle Christmas card competition with her image of Santa, sponsored by Shepherd Motors. The pupil at Manor Way Primary Academy in Halesowen impressed readers who voted for her design. Paige won a set of cards with her design and a cheque for £50 was presented to her school. Paige is pictured with Halesowen Chronicle senior sales consultant Chris Smith and Manor Way Primary Academy headteacher Lisa Buffery

# Call to protect officers

SIX West Midlands Police officers attacked while on duty have called on lawmakers to ramp up sentences for those who assault officers and other emergency services staff.

The group is part of a delegation from the force that met with MPs in Parliament to urge them to do more to protect bobbies on the beat and ambulance workers.

They want to see more widespread use of Tasers, the electro-shock stun weapons which they say enable officers to better protect the public and themselves. They also discussed the use of 'spit hoods', which shield officers from people who try to spit at or bite them.

Tom Cuddeford, interim chairman of West Midlands Police Federation, said: "We want to see better support from MPs for our campaign for tougher and more consistent sentencing of those convicted of assaulting police officers, police staff and other emergency workers."

"We have heard of cases where someone who has thrown acid in an officer's face has received a 20-month prison sentence and another convicted of stabbing an officer being given a 40-day community order. How can that be right? How can that act as a deterrent to others?"

Figures for the first nine months of this year show that almost 600 WMP officers were assaulted while on duty. Mr Cuddeford hoped the figures would give MPs an understanding of the impact of the high number of assaults.

# Horse rescue at museum canal

A HORSE belonging to the Black Country Living Museum fell into a canal during a boat pulling practice session and had to be rescued.

The fire service had to be called to lift the horse, called Danny, out of the water, following the incident on Thursday afternoon. The 14-year-old horse had slipped into the canal.

Laura Wakelin, director of communications at the Tipton Road museum, said: "They were practising when one of our horses unfortunately slipped and fell into the canal. He was with two of our horse handlers, and one of them, Chris Turton, actually jumped in to help."

They called the fire service for assistance and Danny was soon back on dry land without injury.

# Warning of works on a busy route

MAJOR disruption is expected on the Birmingham New Road as work takes place over the weekend.

Lane restrictions will be in place at the junction of Shaw Road between 9.30am and 3.30pm on both Saturday and Sunday.

**NEW YEAR'S EVE  
FAMILY  
DISCO  
PARTY**  
including Buffet with  
Balloons, Hats, Party Poppers etc  
Adults £15.00pp  
Children £7.50pp  
(Under 14)

**BENJAMINS**  
BANQUETING SUITES  
Birmingham Street, Halesowen B63 3HN.  
0121 602 0202  
[www.benjaminsbanquet.co.uk](http://www.benjaminsbanquet.co.uk)

**MASSIVE SALE STARTS**  
28th, 29th, 30th & 31st December 9am-2.30pm

**FIREPLACE FACTORY DIRECT SALE**



[www.fireplacefactorydirect.co.uk](http://www.fireplacefactorydirect.co.uk)

Unit 12, Parkrose Industrial Estate, Middlemore Road B66 2DZ

0121 558 8265

CHECK US OUT ON FACEBOOK [fireplacefactorydirect](https://www.facebook.com/fireplacefactorydirect)

CUT OUT THE  
MIDDLE MAN  
AND BUY DIRECT  
Open Mon-Fri  
8am - 4pm  
Saturday  
8am - 2pm



## Emergency Denture Repairs

Over the Christmas Holiday

For emergency denture repairs over the Christmas Holiday period

Call Oliver on:  
**07701 067261**  
The Dental Shop  
201-203 Halesowen Road, Old Hill, B64 6HE

## Footworks Chiropody

*Our Registered Chiropodist*

Ingrown Toe Nails Treated

Toe Nail Cutting and Trimming

Diabetic Foot Care

General Foot Care

Callus Reduction

Home Visit Service Also Available

**01384 413444**

201-203 Halesowen Road, Old Hill, B64 6HE

# Major cuts for police 'a kick in the teeth'

WEST Midlands Police has had its funding cut by £6 million for next year, which the region's police boss described as a 'kick in the teeth' in a letter to Home Secretary Amber Rudd.

Britain's second biggest force will receive £444.1m – down from £450.1m.

Analysis shows that nationwide police force's Government funding will actually be cut by more than £96m next year, despite the promise that police funding will be protected.

The Home Office is including potential increases in council tax with actual Government funding when calculating the funding.

Mr Jamieson said: "The Policing Minister is trying to say that council tax paid by hard working people is in fact direct funding. It is a kick in the teeth to council tax payers and just not correct."

"The Policing Minister is trying to cover up his cuts and cling to the myth that police funding has been protected – it hasn't. The public may see this as a deception."

"He needs to set the record straight urgently. Funding to local police forces is falling whatever tricks the government may employ."

He added: "Across the country local police forces are facing more than £96m in cuts, which equates to a potential reduction of 2,014 police officers."

Mr Jamieson said: "The West Midlands has seen its force hit harder than anywhere else in the country."

## Hopes high for light rail funding

COUNCIL bosses are hopeful a multi-million pound 'very light rail' innovation centre in Dudley will start after submitting a new funding bid.

Outline plans for the £27.8m complex at Castle Hill were approved in October with chiefs now focusing on securing the money to pay for it.

The centre would be created for the design and construction of lightweight rail vehicles plus research and development facilities.

Dudley Council has lodged a bid for a total of £837,000 with the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership. Development boss Councillor Khurshid Ahmed said: "Creating jobs is a top priority for the council and the very light rail scheme will deliver on this."

## More police speed checks on road

SPEED checks have been stepped up along a Dudley road after two fatal accidents in recent months.

Police say they are responding to community concern about Priory Road.

# Protesters question 'ridiculous' plan



Protesters outside the council meeting

PROTESTERS say plans to knock down three leisure centres in Dudley borough are ridiculous.

Dudley Council wants to build two new centres to replace those closed.

An axe hovers over Dudley Leisure Centre, on Wellington Road, Halesowen Leisure Centre, on Great Cornbow Road, and The Crystal Leisure Centre, Stourbridge.

The new sites suggested are at Flood Street in Dudley and land off the Lye bypass, meaning Halesowen being without a leisure centre.

The Save Our Leisure Centres

group has gained more than 2,500 names on its anti-closure petitions.

The cash-strapped council says it would cost over £19 million to bring the three existing centres up to date.

The Save Our Leisure Centres campaign is being led by former councillor Tracy Wood, who was at the protest by leisure centre users outside a council cabinet meeting on Wednesday.

"It doesn't make any sense," she said.

"I can't see how it is cheaper and more efficient to close three and build two new centres. They could refurbish them – we are not asking for gold-plated treadmills."

The meeting saw the approval of the next stage, a planning model to be created so the council can put forward a business case for the proposals.

Among those demonstrating was Sarah Woodward, fundraiser and coach for charity Dudley Olympics, whose activities include providing weekly swimming sessions for more than 50 disabled people at Halesowen Leisure Centre. She said their clients were 'really upset' by the council move.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Inquiry launched into prison riot

JUSTICE Secretary Liz Truss has commissioned a 'full investigation' into the riot at Winson Green prison.

Violence flared on Friday at the privately-run HMP Birmingham after a prison officer's keys were stolen.

It took more than 12 hours to contain the trouble with a 'Tornado Squad' of specialist officers being sent in and many prisoners later sent to other jails.

One inmate was reportedly seriously injured and four wings were badly damaged at the 1,450-capacity prison run by private firm G4S.

### Axe swinging thug tried to steal a car

A MOTORIST was targeted by a thug with an axe who tried to steal his car.

Police are investigating after the terrifying incident in Halesowen on Monday, December 12.

A 22-year-old man was driving home from a shopping trip to the Merry Hill centre when a car pulled up alongside him on Moat Drive and a man jumped out, smashing the passenger window with an axe.

But the frightened motorist managed to drive away and is not thought to have been hurt.

### Toys for all after donations appeal

UNDER-PRIVILEGED children in Dudley will have a chance to unwrap surprise presents this Christmas as generous customers and staff have donated toys.

Thanks to an initiative run by Dudley Council and Sainsbury at Amblecote and Merry Hill shopping centre, the annual toy appeal will see more than 100 toys and gifts go towards a family Christmas party held by the council-run Family and Adolescent Support Team.

### Hospice donation on the cards from firm

GENEROUS staff at a recruiting agency have donated £1,000 to a hospice instead of sending Christmas cards.

Workers at Masteamps Ltd, based in Dudley and Kidderminster, gave the money to the Mary Stevens Hospice in Stourbridge. Lindsay Jay, compliance director at Masteamps, said: "We are very proud to support such a great local charity."

The hospice has launched its biggest fundraising drive for a new unit.

### Council to test cabbies

COUNCIL staff will take over the running of tests for taxi drivers in Dudley.

Assessments to ensure drivers were competent before being allowed to go out on the road were previously delivered by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency, DVSA.

# Murder arrest after woman found dead

A MAN has been arrested on suspicion of murder over the death of a woman in Kinver.

The 26-year-old woman's body was discovered at a house in the South Staffordshire village.

Staffordshire Police said officers were treating her death as suspicious and a 38-year-old man from Kinver was arrested. He remained in custody for questioning on suspicion of murder on Tuesday.

A Home Office post mortem examination was scheduled to take place. A police guard remained outside the house in Kenrose Mill after the find on Sunday at around 9.30am.

The woman's family was informed of her death and have been offered support by specially trained officers.

Among the tributes left outside the house was one that read: "To Mommy. Miss you so much".

Neighbours on the quiet residential road said they believed the man lived with the woman at the address but that they had only moved in a few weeks ago.

One, who did not want to be named, said: "I think they rented the house. They moved in about three weeks ago. They seemed very happy. The woman was rollerskating in the road the days before with some children. But I gather the children weren't there."

#### Tributes

Another, who also wanted to remain anonymous, said: "They had just moved in. I didn't really know them at all."

Friends had paid tribute to the woman.

They included: "You mean the world to me. Will always love you xxx", "RIP beautiful. Love you so much, going to miss you forever. Love you always. Can't wait to see your beautiful face."

West Midlands Ambulance Service spokesman Jamie Arrowsmith said: "We attended with an ambulance, a community paramedic response vehicle and a paramedic area support officer. We had reports of a woman in cardiac arrest.

"Unfortunately, on arrival it became clear she couldn't be saved and was confirmed deceased."

Anyone with information should contact Staffordshire Police on 101 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

## Fundraiser for family after tragedy



Stourbridge firefighters, including crew commander Chris Green on the bike, held a charity car wash

HUNDREDS of pounds of has been raised through a charity car wash to help the family of a father-of-two motorcyclist who died in a road accident in Halesowen.

Motorists queued up at Stourbridge Fire Station to have their cars soaped and polished on Saturday by firefighters and helpers.

Tom Winters, aged 22, from Kidderminster, died after his motorcycle hit a tree beside Manor Way two months ago.

Members of the emergency services, including firefighters from Stourbridge, battled to save Mr Winters after the accident on Oc-

tobe 30 but he was pronounced dead at the scene.

Mr Winters, a sales assistant at Streetbike in Halesowen, had been on his way to work on the morning of the collision.

An inquest, which heard there was no suggestion of excessive speed, has been adjourned for further police investigations.

Stourbridge crew commander Chris Green revealed that just under £600 was raised on the day.

## STAY WARM AND SECURE

### Affordable Luxury Composite Doors



[www.oaklodgedoors.co.uk](http://www.oaklodgedoors.co.uk)

Oak Lodge Buildings, Furnace Hill, Halesowen, West Midlands B63 3LZ

Call 0121 550 1444



**OPEN** Monday 9.00 am-4.30 pm  
(except Bank Holiday Mondays)  
Friday & Saturday 9.00 am-5.00 pm

**CHRISTMAS OPENING TIMES**

at Blackheath Market

Monday 19th Dec 9 am-5 pm Saturday 24th Dec 9-3.30 pm

Tuesday 20th Dec Closed Monday 26th Dec Closed

Wednesday 21st Dec 9-5 pm Friday 30th Dec 9-5 pm

Thursday 22nd Dec 9-5 pm Saturday 31st Dec 9-3.30 pm

Friday 23rd Dec 9-5 pm Monday 2nd Jan Closed

Normal opening times resume on 3rd January

All enquiries to Oliver Watchorn 07850 742961  
[www.blackheath-market.co.uk](http://www.blackheath-market.co.uk)

**There's something for everyone at...**  
**BLACKHEATH MARKET**  
*Everything But The Kitchen Sink!*

**facebook.**

## THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



MORE weather-forecast English. This week's warning was of "murky-mizzly."

WHOPPERS of our time. I heard one pundit describe the brought-forward hike in council tax to pay for social care as "a temporary rise." Yeah, right.

BUT the council tax had to be the target, didn't it? Freezing it for several years had become a totem of Toryism, a buffer protecting the property-rich from the demands of Britain's uncontrollable welfare bill. The real hit will come when Westminster re-bands the nation's homes based on today's inflated values and the most desirable addresses will be in Much Weeping in the Shires.

SO farewell, Ian McCaskill. I never interviewed the BBC weather forecaster, who recently died, but he suddenly appeared in the office in Broadcasting House many years ago where I was interviewing the chief forecaster, Bill Giles. McCaskill burst in like a busy little shrew, sorting through some papers while robustly denouncing some \*\*\*\*ing \*\*\* he had just fallen out with. It was all light-hearted but to hear the housewives' favourite effing and blinding like a navvy was a bit of a shock. As I wrote at the time, it was like seeing the Pope spit.

THE curse of predictive texting. A friend and I provided ukulele-and-songs entertainment for a Christmas party under our performing names of Two Old Pluckers. We appeared in the programme as Two Old Plonkers. Our complaint was not upheld.

"EU leaders richly deserved Brexit and British voters were right to give them it." Historian and columnist Niall Ferguson, admitting he was wrong to argue against Brexit and is now relieved to be "back on the right side." There is plenty of time for all you other sinners to repent.

FIRST cracker of the season: "What happened to the hyena who swallowed an Oxo cube? He became a laughing stock."

**Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star**

[www.expressandstar.com](http://www.expressandstar.com)

# Hospital chiefs want a total smoking ban

**BLACK Country health bosses want to ban smoking from their sites to help improve the health of patients and staff.**

Nearly 16 per cent of the West Midlands' population smoke and tobacco use is still the single largest cause of premature death in the region.

National health chiefs wrote to each trust pushing them to ban smoking in all hospital buildings and grounds to help people give up and improve health.

Sandwell and West Birmingham Trust have confirmed that when its super hospital opens in November 2018, all sites will be smoke-free.

While the Dudley Group Trust said it was seeking to ban all smoking on its grounds.

Currently both, along with the Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust, allow smoking – but only in designated areas.

### Chief

It comes as Public Health England (PHE) chief executive Duncan Selbie wrote to every NHS trust's chief executive in the country pushing them to ban smoking on all hospital buildings and grounds.

Sandwell and West Birmingham Trust's chief executive, Toby Lewis, said: "Our sites will be smoke-free by November 2018 shortly after our new Midland Met Hospital opens. Currently, we have clear smoking shelters on our sites and expect

patients, visitors and staff to only smoke in these designated areas."

Acting chief executive of the Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, Paul Harrison, said: "The Trust is committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of all staff and visitors to our premises by ensuring a smoke free environment in the direct vicinity of our buildings.

"We do our best to enforce our Smoke Free Policy which states the smoking of cigarettes and e-cigarettes is only permitted in designated smoking shelters at our three hospital sites.

"We offer advice to staff and patients on the risks of smoking and encourage them to stop smoking with the help of nicotine replacements.

"We are in early discussions to create to a totally smoke-free environment and will be consulting with staff and patients."

## Actor plays football hero



Actor James Ayling as Dudley-born Duncan Edwards

THE shirt is Manchester United, the player is Duncan Edwards – Dudley's much loved footballing son.

Actor James Ayling is playing the sporting hero in a low-budget film being shot in the town. The 24-year-old from Sheffield certainly looks the part. The film

The Boy Who Had It All – focuses on the life of Edwards, from growing up in Dudley to his success at Manchester United.

The footballer, who also

played for England, died from injuries sustained in the Munich Air Disaster in 1958, when aged just 21. Yorkshireman James, who now lives in Essex, was chosen for the role over 40 other applicants for the film, which has a budget of £5,000 after a successful fundraising project.

Although he can boast a similar athletic build thanks to playing semi-pro hockey, filmmaker Marcus Distant said his actor's main difficulty was picking the Black Country accent. The movie maker said: "The one thing we have had to work on is his accent, which at first came across quite northern. But, after some work we've got him sounding like a Dudley man."

**Couple give away home to refugees**

A DEVOUT Christian couple have spent their life savings on a house for asylum-seekers.

Steph and Matthew Nevill, from Birmingham, splashed £114,000 on a three bedroom property to help those fleeing conflict – and will let them live there for free.

The couple sacrificed their dream of buying a house together, instead putting 10 years' worth of savings towards a deposit for those needing help.

The couple will continue to live in a religious commune while they pay off the mortgage, having shelved their dream of buying somewhere for the two of them.

But they insist it's not to 'show they're better than anyone else' but to help those seeking asylum build a life for themselves.

Steph, aged 35, said: "We'd been saving up for 10 years, our whole working lives, to put towards a house. But then we started to think about how we wanted to use this money and having both worked with refugees, their stories inspired us. We've heard horrific tales about their struggles and wanted to offer them sanctuary."

Steph and Matthew, also 35, got in touch with the Hope Project, a Midland-based charity offering support for homeless asylum-seekers'. The couple, married for 12 years, bought the house and gave the keys to the charity.

**CHRISTMAS IS A TIME FOR FAMILY BUT I DON'T HAVE ONE...**

...50P could give homeless dogs like me a Christmas & New Year dinner to make us feel loved

**DONATE BY TEXT**

XMAS28 £3, £5, £7  
or £10 to 70070\*

**CALL**  
0121 643 5211

**BY POST**

Birmingham Dogs Home  
Dark Lane, Cross Green,  
Wolverhampton WV10 7PN

**OR DONATE ONLINE**

[www.birminghamdogshome.org.uk](http://www.birminghamdogshome.org.uk)

\*Text costs donation plus a standard rate message. Must get bill payer's permission. Registered Charity No: 222436

**Birmingham Dogs Home Sunnyside**

Giving stray dogs happier tomorrows

## Parking concern for homes by hospital

AROUND 130 homes could be built near Russells Hall Hospital, sparking fears it could lead to more parking problems.

Council bosses are poised to approve the plans for the 11-acre development off Red Kite Drive and Middlepark Road.

Objections have been raised including a petition launched by tenants living at sheltered accommodation at Rotary House.

Parking has been a long-term problem with streets near the hospital clogged by motorists keen to avoid parking fees. Hundreds of parking tickets have been issued in the side streets.

The land is also listed as a Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation, and concern has been raised about the impact on badger colonies.

### Bungalows

The development application comes from Keepmoat Homes for a mix of houses, bungalows and apartments.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, planning and regeneration boss, wants the development to go ahead. He said: "It is mixed feelings as far as the community are concerned.

"But this is a regeneration opportunity for more houses, of which there is a great shortage at the moment.

DUDLEY saw its primary schools fall to the bottom of the pile in the Black Country, with fewer than half of all pupils reaching the benchmark standard.

Across the borough, 49 per cent of pupils achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and maths.

Dudley came joint 122nd in the national league table. High-performing schools included Blowers Green Primary and Brierley Hill Primary, both of which saw 82 per cent of youngsters reach the required levels in the three key subject areas.

Dudley's education boss, Councillor Ian Cooper said: "The newly published league tables are disappointing. We recognise that this was a transitional year with schools and teachers working hard to prepare children for new, challenging tests based on a revised national curriculum that places higher demands on children."

"Whilst results across the borough are not what we would have wished, it is important to note that a significant number of our schools achieved test results that were significantly above the national average, with many pupils making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics."

He praised teachers for their dedication and added that he expects to see 'a stronger set of results' in 2017.

Just over half of pupils in

By Pete Madeley

Sandwell's primary schools achieved the expected standards in reading, writing and maths as 51 per cent of 11-year-olds reached the required levels in the Key Stage Two SAT tests.

The results made Sandwell second out of all the Black Country's local authorities.

The borough came joint 105th in the national league table.

The top performing primary in Sandwell was St Gregory's Catholic Primary in Smethwick, where 93 per cent of the 30 pupils who sat exams hit the benchmark standard.

Councillor Simon Hackett, cabinet member for children's services, said: "The Government significantly raised the benchmark for children's performance.

The results don't mean that the children aren't doing as well - it's just that the test is now significantly harder."

## Stadium gets £550,000 for new pitch



Steve Gay and Andy Webb from The Dell stadium, Brierley Hill, where a new pitch is planned

AN ARTIFICIAL grass pitch at a sports stadium in Brierley Hill could be getting a £660,000 revamp.

The Dell Stadium on Brey Road has been granted £550,000 from the Football Foundation through the FA and a potential £110,000 from Dudley Council.

The plans include a refurbishment of the existing pitch, extended pitch area with a new playing surface, hard standing areas, floodlights and storage.

Andy Bell, interim head of sport and leisure at Dudley Council, said: "The pitch has reached the end of its natural life, it was put down in 1998 but various complaints have been made about the quality.

"We're hoping to start work on the construction in March or April which will run for 18 weeks."

The pitch is currently used by Wordsley Wasps, Pensnett Panthers and Dudley Town football clubs.

Mr Bell added: "We're hoping that the new pitch will encourage more clubs to come and train or play at the Dell."

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### More than ever due to use airport

SOARAWAY passenger figures are seeing Birmingham Airport heading into its biggest ever festive period.

Around half-a-million passengers are expected to jet away to visit family or friends or just for a touch of winter sun over the upcoming Christmas fortnight.

It comes hot on the heels of another record-breaking month for the West Midlands gateway, which has enjoyed a blockbuster 2016.

Nearly 780,000 passengers travelled through the airport in November. In total 779,583 passengers were recorded giving an increase of 12.5 per cent compared to the same month last year - equivalent to 86,550 more people.

### Rieu concert at arena postponed

SEVERAL concerts by Dutch violinist Andre Rieu and his orchestra, including one due to be held at the Genting Arena last night (Wednesday), have been postponed after one of his musicians suffered a heart attack.

Mr Rieu, one of the biggest stars of easy listening music, said: "Thank you all so much for your understanding in this difficult moment."

Fans are advised to retain their ticket for the rescheduled Brum show on March 22. Those unable to attend the new date can get full refunds, available from point of sale.

**Make the *RIGHT* decision this Winter and give RYDALE a ring...**

# RYDALE

# WINTER SALE



**Windows, Doors, Conservatories, Orangeries, Porches, Fascias and Soffit Boards**

Cleaning Services now available to restore all your uPVC products. Guttering and Driveways cleaning available

No deposits or stage payments, you only pay when the installation has been completed

Visit one of the largest conservatory and window showrooms in the UK

Supplied & Fitted... across the Midlands

Repair Service Available



Replace the existing roof on your conservatory and create a comfortable environment and a room you can use all year round

Every window and conservatory is custom made to the most rigorous quality standards you will find in the industry. No other company in the area has more experience and know how than Rydale, and that's why we have been in business for more than 30 years.

Sat Dec 24th to Wed 28th Dec **CLOSED**  
Thur 29th & Fri 30th Dec 10am - 4pm  
Sat 31st Dec 9am - 3pm  
Mon 2nd Jan **CLOSED**  
Tues 3rd Jan **Normal opening times resume**

Open Weekdays: 9am to 5.30pm

Saturday: 9am to 4pm Sunday Closed

**MASSIVE DISCOUNTS AVAILABLE ON JANUARY INSTALLATIONS**

FREEPHONE 0800 917 6060 [www.rydalewindows.co.uk](http://www.rydalewindows.co.uk)

Long Lane, Blackheath, Halesowen B62 9LS

Open Weekdays: 9am to 5.30pm

Saturday: 9am to 4pm Sunday Closed



# Anyone got a spare library to give away?

THE Black Country Living Museum is looking for an unused former library to add to its open-air village. Something tells me that in the current climate they won't have to look too far to find one.

And there will be a nice art gallery and a few swimming pools available soon...

□ □ □

INTERESTINGLY, one of the reasons given by Dudley Council for closing swimming pools is the declining number of people who use them.

Now that I can well believe. Indeed, I used to be a regular user of the pool at Dudley Leisure Centre until 11 years ago or so, when I stopped going altogether. Why? Because they stopped opening to the general public in the evening, to accommodate a swimming club from another centre they had closed.

□ □ □

A POLL in our sister paper the Express & Star found that 75 per cent of readers think shops should be banned from opening on Boxing Day.

As something of a libertarian, I'm not a fan of banning many things. But then I think back to the days when I used to work Boxing Day, and the distraction of the inconsiderate shoppers who not only considered it their inalienable right to park on our office car park near a well-known shopping mall, but also to climb over the fence next to the window just to get to the shops more quickly.

Can you imagine how annoying that used to be? Does anybody really need to go shopping that badly?

Still if 75 per cent of the population want Boxing Day shopping banned, then maybe the shopping malls will be deserted on December 26. Either that, or our readers are far more sensible than the rest of the population.

□ □ □

The Football Association is "out of balance", filled with "elderly white men" and in desperate need of reform. So say four, elderly white men, who all used to be senior executives of the FA before stepping down for one reason or another.

Greg Dyke, David Bernstein, David Davies and Lord Triesman want the Government to step in and add impose a bit of diversity into the mix. Yippee, never mind Brexit, let's nationalise football.

I suspect if you did a straw poll of most fans about what is wrong with football, the main bugbears would probably revolve around there being too much money in the game, too much of it going to a cartel of half a dozen clubs dotted around London and the north-west, and the persistent under-achievement of the national team.

I bet not one of them would be calling for a task force headed by John Major or Gordon Brown.



The old Elephant & Castle pub in Wolverhampton



Gas Showroom, decorated for the Coronation in 1937



The site of the former Parish's Restaurant, West Bromwich

# Historic buildings to be talk of the town

£10m of Lottery funding could enable landmark buildings to find a new home at a popular attraction. **ROB COX** reports

**HISTORIC** buildings from across the region could resurrected at the Black Country Living Museum under multi-million pound plans to create a 1940-60s town.

Landmark community buildings, much-loved pubs and industrial sites are among those which have been targeted by bosses at the popular tourist attraction.

While some would be taken down brick-by-brick and then rebuilt at the Dudley site, others which no longer exist would be recreated using archive images and information.

The proposed attraction is reliant upon £10 million of Heritage Lottery funding and a bid has submitted for the cash.

If successful work could begin in 2018 and 93 jobs would be created – with hundreds more while work is carried out.

## Demolition

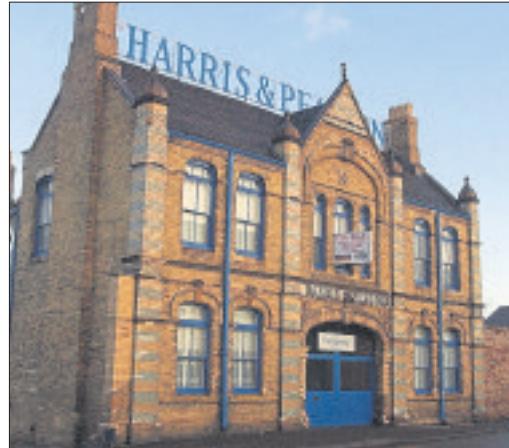
Among the buildings identified for the 1940-60s town is Woodsid Library in Stourbridge Road, Dudley, which has lain empty and boarded up since it was closed in 2008 under council cost-cutting measures.

Also being lined-up for 'translocation' is the West Bromwich Gas Showroom in the town's High Street, and the neighbouring Parish's Restaurant – both of which have been scheduled for demolition.

The showroom was badly damaged by a Blitz raid in 1940.

The Elephant & Castle pub in Wolverhampton was controversially demolished in 2001 but could be revived as a 1950s watering hole to inform visitors about changes in social attitudes towards drinking and social life.

A bowling green could also form part of the attraction, as could a brickworks modelled on



The Harris & Pearson building, in Brettell Lane, Brierley Hill



Woodside Library, Dudley, is earmarked for 'translocation'

the former Harris & Pearson site in Quarry Bank. The museum's chief executive Andrew Lovett said he was excited about the proposed town, plans for which are the culmination of a major research project.

He said: "This would be a historic development centred on the 1940s through to the 1960 and which would include a town and also great industrial representation.

"The buildings we have identified would be clustered and we have had great fun designing the streetscape. When was the last time someone got to design a town in the Black Country?"

"We think we have got a very compelling bid for the funding but you have to recognise it is a very competitive environment in which we are seeking the money."

"The message I want to get across which has come about from consultations is about the amount of support we have had for the de-

velopment from the people of the Black Country. It is hugely heartening for us. It is easy to forget and take that sort of thing for granted but it is a real boost to think we are doing the right thing."

Another building which has been identified for the town is William Griffin & Sons, a chain-making firm in Woods Lane, Cradley, which has also been earmarked for demolition by Sandwell Council.

It would be used to demonstrate the industry's move to merchandised production and the globalisation of trade during the post-war period.

But Mr Lovett said he was most excited by the prospect of relocating Woodside Library with action having been sought by campaigners for several years.

He added: "Having had discussion with the local authority we are aware there is a cove-

nant on that building from the Earl of Dudley who wanted it to be maintained for public use.

"So if that can be brought here it would be great and it would satisfy that covenant."

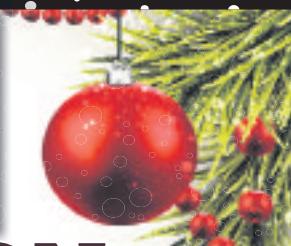
"It is a large and very striking building and is very much of the style we are after for what we want to create."

A decision on the funding will be made in the spring. If successful, the £10m would be used to create the town, a new visitor centre and car park, as well as the extension of the museum's train line.

There are also plans to turn the current Rolfe Street Entrance Building into a new learning centre to enable the development of a new learning programme.

Mr Lovett said the scheme could create 93 jobs at the museum, 58 at other Black Country firms and around 450 while construction takes place.

## BATHROOM MAGIC



# OUR WINTER SALE IS NOW ON...

CLOSED FROM 19TH DECEMBER - OPEN AGAIN 3RD JANUARY 2017 UNIT 35, ENTERPRISE TRADING ESTATE, HURST LANE, BRIERLEY HILL DY5 1TX

Tel: 01384 79300 [www.bathroommagic.co.uk](http://www.bathroommagic.co.uk)



Find us on Facebook

# British constitution is alive and kicking

THE UK has long been recognised for having a constitution which is flexible and capable of evolution, unlike many other countries where their constitutions are rigid and fixed because they are enshrined in statute.

This can be seen in the recent Supreme Court case over the question of whether the Government can trigger Article 50 without a further vote of the Westminster Parliament to create a further Act of legislation. It has taken over 20 hours of legal argument over four days to weigh up the merits of the case in January next year. This constitutional debate has reinforced to me as

it is not a question of who is right or wrong, or whether ministers, through executive powers, have the right to use prerogative powers which are reserved to the crown in order to trigger Article 50. In the words of the President of the Supreme Court, Lord Neuberger: "we are not being asked to overturn the results of the EU Referendum... the ultimate question in this case concerns the process by which the result can lawfully be brought into effect."

We will know the outcome of the case in January next year. This constitutional debate has reinforced to me as

a lawyer that the British constitution is alive and kicking.

The British constitution has allowed impartial judges to consider a case brought by individuals challenging a decision made by ministers in Government to determine whether or not that decision was lawful. This case demonstrates, regardless of who is right or wrong in this matter, that democracy and individual rights can be freely and openly expressed in Britain.

COLIN RODRIGUES  
Hawkins Hatton Corporate  
Lawyers Ltd, Dudley

## Antics of reality TV in bad taste

REGARDING 'I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here!' I have only ever watched a small part of one episode some years ago. Then some poor creature was being eaten, but the really sickening part about it was the total disregard for the suffering of the animal.

The message being portrayed is that unless an animal has the 'cute factor' it has no value. Is this really what we want our children to believe? You try to bring them up to have respect and consideration for all creatures and then this revolting barbarism is churned out as entertainment. Everyone involved in the making of this programme should be thoroughly ashamed.

I am amazed that the RSPCA have not done something about it. Of course though the other message being sent out loud and clear is that if enough money or fame is involved basically anything goes.

SUSAN CLARKE  
Stourbridge

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### POST

Dudley Chronicle,  
Chronicle Editorial,  
51-53 Queen Street  
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

### EMAIL

dudley.chrons@  
expressandstar.co.uk

*Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.*

## Council just don't learn from mistakes

DUDLEY Council, over the years, has wasted an awful lot of money, yet the councillors have not learned anything, have they?

In Stone Street there was a small but very useful car park. The council altered it and decided to rename it the 'town square'. It has only been used for this purpose occasionally. Yet this year they have stuck the Christmas tree there. Why? How many visitors to the town centre know that it is there?

Around the town, there are numerous 'plaques' that are supposed to tell people the history of the town. Several times I have spoken to people who have not even noticed them. I asked if there would be leaflets to back up the plaques, and was told 'they are being prepared'. This was way back at the beginning of the summer. Has anyone seen them yet?

And who is the bloke sitting on the bench outside of the bakery? There is, on the bench, writing that explains who he is but it is not easy to read.

Now the council want to waste yet more money that they haven't got.

PETER COLE  
Kingswinford

## You have never had it so good

THE talk of today's so-called poverty, in relation to that of the 1920s, gives vent to comparisons of then and now.

No central heating, no double glazing, no fitted carpets, no mains gas, no electricity for your washing machine, tumble dryer, iron, etc.

The hand-me-down clothes were compulsory. There were no fridge freezers, only the frost on the inside of your bedroom windows. No benefits, no work, no pay, no dough, no eat!

Today's kids have no idea of that world of real poverty. They have no concept of the hardship after the Great War.

I remember stories from my grandmother, who told me that hungry kids would be given a pebble to suck on, thus creating saliva to appease a starving young stomach.

You never had it so good! Poverty? What poverty?

M ADDISON  
Wolverhampton

# 4 DAY SALE STARTS

Tuesday 27th - Friday 30th December 11am - 4pm

## MASSIVE SAVINGS

### INSPIRATIONAL FIRES & FIREPLACES

## Be Inspired ...



Showroom: 404-406 Bearwood Road  
Bearwood B66 4EX  
Tel: 0121 429 3186



[www.inspirationalfires.co.uk](http://www.inspirationalfires.co.uk)



email: [info@inspirationalfires.co.uk](mailto:info@inspirationalfires.co.uk)

**Yew  
Tree**

## NURSING HOME

Yew Trees, Yew Tree Place, Romsley, B62 0NX  
Tel: 01562 710809  
[www.yewtreebynursinghome.co.uk](http://www.yewtreebynursinghome.co.uk)



Offering you nursing experience and expertise in our idyllic country retreat  
ensuring your stay with us feels like home from home.

### WE OFFER

- 24 hour nursing care in a warm and friendly environment
- Single and double bedrooms available, en-suite facilities
- Specialist care for dementia, nursing and Palliative Care
- Weekly activity packages, day trips, pub visits, etc Home cooked meals prepared by our 5\* rated kitchens
- Large gardens where you can become friends with our Shetland pony, cat and guinea pig

Come and see for yourselves - no appointment necessary

# Motorist in collision avoids jail despite stolen van lie

AN ELECTRICIAN told police his van had been stolen, after it had crashed into a tree with him at the wheel.

Simon Rowe had used his works van to pick up a takeaway to share with his then partner but careered into a tree in Priory Road, Dudley, after then abandoned the vehicle in a 'dangerous' state.

Rowe lied to officers, telling them the van had been stolen, before later admitting his guilt, prosecutor Neil Ahuja told Wolverhampton Crown Court. He said: "Shortly after 10.30pm on May 18, officers were called to a road traffic collision where a vehicle had been abandoned. There was significant damage to the van and the tree.

"Members of the public saw a man make off from the vehicle. There was a strong smell of alcohol in the car and empty cans of beer in the footwell. "At 7.25am the next morning, officers attended an address in Bradfield Way. He told officers the van had been stolen. It was a works van and he was the only person with access to the keys."

He told his partner at the time what had happened and that he was thinking about telling the police that the van had been stolen, but she didn't want anything to do with the incident and wouldn't be involved in the lie. Mr Ahuja added: "He was arrested by police and he told them during interview that his partner was lying because she was bitter over a previous break up."

The father-of-two pleaded guilty to perverting the course of justice, driving without due care and attention and failing to surrender to police bail.

Rowe was given a fourth-month jail sentence, suspended for two years. He was also disqualified from driving for 18 months, ordered to pay £500 in fines and costs and to carry out 50 hours of unpaid work.

Judge Nicholas Webb told Rowe: "You are very lucky not to be going to prison."

Visit [www.sense.org.uk](http://www.sense.org.uk) or call 020 7520 0962.

## Help charity with holidays for disabled

CHARITY Sense is calling for volunteers from the West Midlands to help out with a short breaks programme which it runs for disabled children.

Launching in February 2017, the short breaks will follow this year's successful programme and will see 30 children and young people experience up to three separate trips away from home over 12 months.

The programme has been praised for the respite it provides for families, and vital developmental benefits for the participants. The breaks are designed to offer the children from the area the chance to make new friends, increase their independence and try new activities, from outdoor trails to cookery classes.

Eleanor Coker, of Sense, said: "You could be kayaking, horse riding, camping, whilst making a big difference to the children we support and their families."

Visit [www.sense.org.uk](http://www.sense.org.uk) or call 020 7520 0962.

## Pick up a name for a zoo penguin

DUDLEY Zoo is looking for help to name its penguins.

The zoo has had great success with its colony since it started in 1991 with just five hand-reared birds. It now boasts a headcount of 85 – one of the largest colonies in the UK.

But following a recent check, bird keepers have discovered that 40 of Penguin Bay's residents don't have official names on their record, just identification numbers.

Zoo spokeswoman Andrea Hales, said: "With so many names to think of we decided to let visitors have the job, so we're offering a limited number of penguin adoption packages where adopters can name their animal themselves, which makes it extra special."

"We'll then add the chosen name to the penguin's official records, which will remain with it for its entire life-time."

An animal's records are kept on the web-based Zoological Information Management System, which is updated regularly with the animal's health, care and wellbeing details.

It can be shared and accessed across the world and is easily at hand by keepers or the zoo's vet.

Prices of the special penguin adoption packages start from £50 and include a certificate, animal factsheet and photo, the quarterly ZooNooz newsletter and a zoo admission ticket.

The bishop said: "Food banks and people not being able to afford some of the very basics in life is a big problem."

"The Feed a Family appeal is one that goes right to the heart of loving – we're all neighbours and should come together at Christmas time."

"Food banks are still something that are here in our society as people are so stretched financially."

"We have to all come together and look at helping to feed people during this important time."

The Feed a Family appeal ran until December 14, helping the Black Country Food Bank, among others.

## Bishop backed feed families appeal



The Bishop of Dudley the Rt Rev Graham Usher with donated goods

THE need for food banks means the Black Country faces a "big problem", says the Bishop of Dudley, who backed the Feed a Family This Christmas appeal.

The Right Reverend Graham Usher donated boxes of food and toiletries that he collected himself for the appeal run by The Chronicle's sister newspaper the Express & Star.

The bishop is the latest well-known face to support the campaign which aims to benefit families across the Black Country and Staffordshire.

Well over 3,000 items of food, toiletries and clothing such as socks have been passed on to a number of food banks around the Black Country.

A range of donations, which have included Christmas selection boxes, socks, shower gel and other food items have all been donated by a large number of charitable people and organisations.

The bishop said: "Food banks and people not being able to afford some of the very basics in life is a big problem."

"The Feed a Family appeal is one that goes right to the heart of loving – we're all neighbours and should come together at Christmas time."

"Food banks are still something that are here in our society as people are so stretched financially."

"We have to all come together and look at helping to feed people during this important time."

The Feed a Family appeal ran until December 14, helping the Black Country Food Bank, among others.

## Service is recruiting student paramedics

VACANCIES for student paramedic roles are to open with the West Midlands Ambulance Service.

There will be 300 places on offer with positions available in Black Country, Birmingham, Shropshire, Staffordshire and Coventry and Warwickshire.

The service will receive applications until January 8. For further details on applying for the roles contact recruit [ment@wmas.nhs.uk](mailto:ment@wmas.nhs.uk)

## BORSHCH Gas & Electrical Superstore

PEAR TREE LANE, DUDLEY

DY2 0QU • 01384 571 879

Christmas and New Year Opening Times for Dudley Branch  
Sat 24 Dec - 9.30am - 4.30pm Wed 28 Dec - 9.30am - 6pm Sun 1 Jan - Closed  
Sun 25 Dec - Closed Thur 29 Dec - 9.30am - 6pm Mon 2 Jan - 10am - 4pm  
Mon 26 Dec - Closed Fri 30 Dec - 9.30am - 6pm Tues 3 Jan - 9.30am - 6pm  
Tue 27 Dec - 10am - 4pm Sat 31 Dec - 9.30am - 4.30pm



A HUGE RANGE OF INTEGRATED APPLIANCES AVAILABLE



OTHER BRANCHES IN  
Walsall  
Unit 17-19  
Victorian Arcade W51 IRE  
01922 279927

Erdington  
I-41 Sutton Road  
Erdington B23 6OH  
0121 448 0202

FREE DELIVERY OVER £150  
WITH THIS VOUCHER  
Expires 31st December 2016

Extended guarantee available • Members of Retra • Pictures for illustration purposes only • Local delivery & installation • Sirius Retailer of the Year 2012

[www.borschselectric.co.uk](http://www.borschselectric.co.uk)

## Our papers make a difference

When asked to help local good causes, readers sent in 533,500 tokens, up 73% on last year.

# 533,500

Call our advertising team on 01902 313131 to find out how they can help you reach an engaged audience.



Express & Star



# Honour for sex health pioneer

THE founder of Sandwell and Dudley's sex health service has been honoured in the BBC Radio 4 Woman's Hour Power List.

Helen Brook, founder of Brook, the UK's leading sexual health and wellbeing charity for young people, was one of seven women named in this year's list which celebrates women who have made the biggest impact on women's lives.

The first Brook clinic opened in 1964 offering support and contraception to unmarried women and reducing illegal abortions. This clinic, unlike the Family Planning Association where she had previously worked, was not required to confine its service to women who were married or about to be married.

Helen Brook died in 1997. Today Brook has nine services in Sandwell and Dudley.

# £17m raised from parking fees and fines in five years

COUNCILS across the Black Country and Staffordshire have made nearly £17 million on parking over the last five years.

The City of Wolverhampton Council came out highest on the list with a £5,097,000 surplus produced from council parking operations between 2011-2016. It placed Wolverhampton 100 out of the national list of 353 councils. The next highest was Lichfield council which also made more than £5m.

The figures come from the statutory annual returns councils make to the Department for Communities and Local Government and are the result of parking operations, including charges and penalty notices, deducting running costs.

In the 2015-16 financial year alone Wolverhampton council had a surplus of £1.8m and described the figures as 'modest', pointing out that, by law, any surplus from parking enforcement had to be reinvested into transportation projects.

Dudley Council, who had a surplus of £2.3m,

maintain they have more on-street car parking than any other local council.

Councillor Hilary Bills, Dudley's cabinet member for environmental services, said: "Dudley has more free on-street car parking than any neighbouring council. We take steps to encourage free parking in our town centres, where possible, including offering free parking in the town centres on three Saturdays in the run up to Christmas. With central government funding continuing to reduce, we are using all of our funds in the most efficient and effective way possible for the benefit of local people."

# Police crimes are revealed

ASSAULTS, drink-driving, misusing computers and allowing dogs to worry sheep - almost 50 West Midlands police officers have been cautioned or convicted of criminal offences over the past three years.

The list of 46 offenders include police constables, special constables and police sergeants.

A Freedom of Information Request has also revealed what action the officers faced after misconduct hearings. That included dismissal, resignation and management action. Some are still yet to be dealt with.

Since 2014, 28 police officers have been dismissed. Seven have resigned, while six faced management action or a written warning.

# GET IN THE CHRISTMAS 'SPIRIT' AT DRINK STOP

## These spirits



Bells • Teachers • Gordons Gin  
Smirnoff Vodka Red  
Russian Standard Vodka

## Carling



## Pepsi, 7UP or Vimto



## Magners Cider (Original or Pear)



ONLY £11.99 EACH (70CL)

8 Cans £6.49  
24 Cans £17.99

## Carlsberg



500 ml

8 Cans £6.49  
24 Cans £17.99

## Prosecco



£6.99  
OR 2 Bottles for £9.99

ONLY £5.99

3 FOR £9.99

## Irish Meadow



ONLY £5.99

3 FOR £9.99

## Echo Falls or Blossom Hill



Red, White, Rose

750 ml

3 FOR £9.99

## Banks's Bitter or Mild



8 Cans £6.99

24 Cans £19.99

8 Cans £6.99

24 Cans £19.99

## Strongbow Original Cider



## MANY MORE FANTASTIC OFFERS IN STORE

Opening Hours  
11 am-10 pm  
Monday-Saturday  
12-9 pm Sunday

Drink Stop  
72 Long Lane  
Halesowen  
B62 9DJ



# FURNITURE EMPORIUM

## BOXING DAY SALE NOW ON!

Open Boxing Day 11-4 pm



### Belmont Dining Set + Six Chairs

Various colours, various sizes

Was £599 NOW £399



### Nikki Suite

3+2 Various Colours

Was £999 NOW £799

+ 100s MORE IN STORE ON OFFER



### Spencer Double Divan Bed

Was £289 Now £199

FREE headboard FREE 2 drawers

Various colours and sizes available



Wardrobes Various colours from £99 assembled  
Large Showroom  
Corner sofas from £450 Upholstered by our craftsmen  
Stourbridge Road, Halesowen (Opposite The King Edward Pub)

Tel: 0121 448 4340  
OPEN Opening Boxing Day 11-4 pm Closed New Years Day  
Mon-Sat 10-6 pm Sun 11-4 pm

www.the-furnitureemporium.com

Picture for illustration purposes only



# PUBLIC NOTICE

# LEVINES

## FURNITURE BEDS AND CARPETS

**SALE NOW ON  
OPEN BOXING DAY**

**ALL STOCKS  
MUST BE SOLD**

**FOR 3 DAYS ONLY**  
Don't hesitate, these offers and  
prices will never be repeated!!!

**Save <sup>up to</sup>  
60%**

MON 26TH DEC  
10AM - 5PM

TUES 27TH DEC  
9AM - 6PM

WED 28TH DEC  
9AM - 6PM

**THIS IS OUR BIGGEST SALE EVER!! EXTRA  
DISCOUNT OFF OUR ALREADY LOW SALE  
PRICES FOR THE FIRST 3 DAYS ONLY**

### MEGA DOOR BUSTER

Full Double Size Memory Foam/  
Spring. Aloe Vera Mattress  
Only One Per Store

**SAVE 60% £59**

### MEGA DOOR BUSTER

Ultra 3Str + 2Str  
Latest Design Sofas  
One Set Only Per Store

**SAVE 50% £399**

### MEGA DOOR BUSTER

Full Double Size Ortho  
'Cardiff' Quality Mattress  
Micro Quilted Cover One Only  
Quick Delivery Only **£49**

### MEGA DOOR BUSTER

Ashmere Light Wood  
Oblong Table + 4 Chairs  
One Set Only Per Store

**SAVE 60% £109**

### Superb Value Mattresses

Single Size **£29**  
Double Size **£59**  
King Size **£79**

### Deluxe Medium Firm Mattresses

Single Size **£59**  
Double Size **£89**  
King Size **£109**

### Luxury Memory Foam Mattresses

Single Size **£95**  
Double Size **£119**  
King Size **£169**

### Luxury Pocket Mattresses

Single Size **£139**  
Double Size **£189**  
King Size **£229**

### MEGA PRICEBUSTER

FIRST 2  
CUSTOMERS ONLY!  
The Haven Double  
Size Faux Leather Frame



**£49**

Mattress Extra

### MEGA PRICEBUSTER

FIRST 2  
CUSTOMERS ONLY!  
The Tetras Black Double  
Metal Sturdy Frame



**£49**

Mattress Extra

### MEGA PRICEBUSTER

FIRST 4  
CUSTOMERS ONLY!  
The Waverley Double  
Ottoman Storage Frame



**£149**

Mattress Extra

### MEGA PRICEBUSTER

FIRST 3  
CUSTOMERS ONLY!  
The Regent 3/4 Size  
Black Frame



**£49**

Mattress Extra

### MEGA PRICEBUSTER

FIRST 3  
CUSTOMERS ONLY!  
The Balmoral Heavy Oak  
Extending Table and  
4 Cream Chairs



**£249 SAVE 60%**

### MEGA PRICEBUSTER

FIRST 4  
CUSTOMERS ONLY!  
The Borba 4 Door  
7ft 2in x 7ft Unit  
Oak Finish \* Home Assembly



**£199**

### MEGA PRICEBUSTER

FIRST 2  
CUSTOMERS ONLY!  
The Manhattan 4 door combi  
6ft 3in x 6ft 7in high - home  
assembly, Light Ash finish



**£269**

### MEGA PRICEBUSTER

FIRST 3  
CUSTOMERS ONLY!  
Solid Pine Bunks With  
Mattresses



**£199**

### BED PRICES SLASHED

FIRST  
CUSTOMERS ONLY!!  
The Montana  
Antq Brass Super  
Bedframe



**ONLY £99**

Mattress Extra

### BED PRICES SLASHED

FIRST 2  
CUSTOMERS ONLY!  
The Everest double memory  
foam/spring 2 drawer Bed  
Save 60% off RRP



**ONLY £199**

### BED PRICES SLASHED

FIRST 4  
CUSTOMERS ONLY!  
The Majestic double 1000  
pocket sprung top quality  
Bed. Save 60% off RRP



**ONLY £219**

### BED PRICES SLASHED

FIRST 3  
CUSTOMERS ONLY!  
The Dreamland 3/4 size  
small Double Divan  
Save 50% off RRP



**ONLY £149**

**SALE  
STARTS  
BOXING DAY  
10AM**

**LEVINES**

Oakfield House, Level Street,  
Brierley Hill 01384 79393  
(next to the Copthorne Hotel)

**LEVINES**

583 Bearwood Road,  
Bearwood B66 4BH  
0121 420 2991

**SALE  
STARTS  
BOXING DAY  
10AM**

# WINTER Sale

JUST FOR THE START OF OUR WINTER SALE

## EXTRA discount

off our already low **SALE PRICES**



Modern large sofa in a textured fabric. **WAS £999 SALE £749**



Fiona corner group. **WAS £949 SALE £749**



Oak finish ext. dining table & 4 chairs. **WAS £1099 SALE £499**

**EXTRA**  
discount price

**£349** SAVE £650

**EXTRA**  
discount price

**£699** SAVE £250

**EXTRA**  
discount price

**£499** SAVE £560

**“ SALE STARTS BOXING DAY 10am! ”**

**PRICE  
MATCH  
PROMISE**

We'll not be  
beaten on Price!  
That's our promise  
to you!

HOLIDAY OPENING TIMES: BANK HOLIDAY MONDAY & TUESDAY 10-6pm, Wednesday to Friday 10-5.30pm,  
NEW YEAR'S EVE (Saturday) 10-6pm, NEW YEAR'S DAY (Sunday) 11-5pm, BANK HOLIDAY MONDAY 10-6pm

Visit us at [www.williamandsons.co.uk](http://www.williamandsons.co.uk) and sign up to receive  
**OUR EXCLUSIVE PRIVILEGE OFFERS!**



Buy this opening week of our **Winter Sale**  
for **EXTRA discount** throughout the whole store...  
plus **pay nothing** until Summer 2017,  
with **no deposit** and **no interest ever!**



Walnut finish dining table & 4 chairs. **WAS £1059 SALE £959**



Natural oak effect robe. **WAS £399 SALE £269**



Miracoil luxury storage divan set. **WAS £649 SALE £499**

**EXTRA**  
discount price

**£499** SAVE £600

**EXTRA**  
discount price

**£199** SAVE £200

**EXTRA**  
discount price

**£299** SAVE £350

**WILLIAM & SONS**  
[www.williamandsons.co.uk](http://www.williamandsons.co.uk)

Level Street | Merry Hill | Dudley | West Midlands | DY5 1UA | T. 01384 77444

Alstons Baker 



























0% APR Representative \*Deferred interest free credit offer available on orders over £399. Representative Example: Cash Price £399. Deposit £0. Total Amount of Credit £399. Duration of the Agreement 18 months. 12 x Monthly Repayments of £33.25 starting 6 months after delivery or collection. Annual Rate of Interest 0%. Representative APR 0%. Total Amount Payable £399. Written details available on request. Credit is subject to status. Terms & Conditions apply. Price Match Promise Terms & Conditions apply. Ask in store or see our website for further details. All offers subject to availability E&OE.



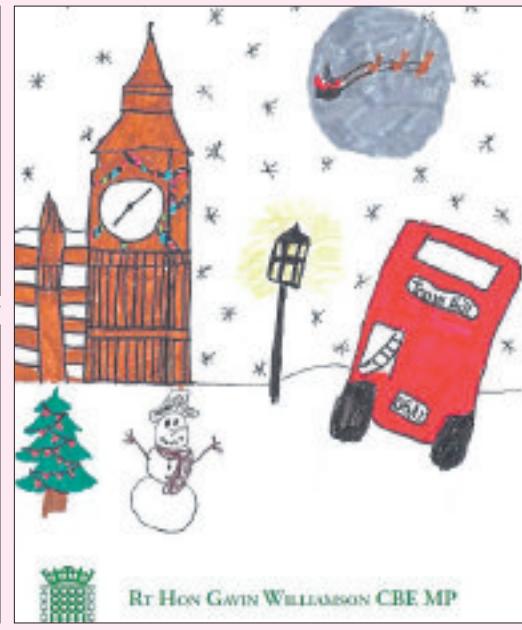
Philip Hammond's card, featuring his dogs, Rex and Oscar



Ian Austin's Christmas card, designed by Charleigh Finch of Bramford Primary School, Dudley



One of Theresa May's three designs, this one drawn by Isabelle Milnes, aged five



RT HON GAVIN WILLIAMSON CBE MP



MP Mike Wood's card, designed by Maidensbridge Primary Schools pupil Alex Maher



John Spellar's card, given an extra bit of festive pizzazz thanks to Photoshop



Emma Reynolds' card, designed by Perry Hall Primary School pupil Kit Lewis

# MPs play their cards right for Christmas

FROM stunning images of Parliament, to schoolchildren's drawings and a pair of lovable pooches decked out in festive scarves – MPs have some novel ways of spreading the Christmas cheer.

While some politicians stick to the standard House of Commons issue cards, others run competitions among local school children which can last for months and garner hundreds of entries.

Gavin Williamson chose the latter route, despite having had a busier year than most having been appointed the Government's Chief Whip by Theresa May.

The winning design, by Amelie Moseley from Corbett CE Primary School, Bobbington, features a London bus, a snowman and the ubiquitous Elizabeth Tower, which houses Big Ben.

It will be sent out to around 700 people, although Mr Williamson is taking extra care not to forget his own parents as he did last year.

"I sent all the cards out but completely forgot to send my mum and dad one," he said.

"This year I'm determined to make sure everyone gets one, although I've already signed so many of them I feel like my right hand's about to fall off."

## Adorned

Labour's Emma Reynolds launched a competition for pupils at eight schools. Of the hundreds of entries the Wolverhampton North East MP picked a design by Kit Lewis, 10, who attends Perry Hall Primary School.

The card, which features a drawing of a Christmas tree adorned with a star, has been sent out to more than 600 people.

Ms Reynolds said: "I think the image is very striking. This was the biggest competition I have ever run and the standard of entries was the best yet."

Dudley North MP Ian Austin sends out hundreds of Christmas cards, with the Queen and the Prime Minister among the recipients.

After a contest among local school children that garnered hundreds of entries, Charleigh Finch of Bramford Primary School produced the winning design that adorns the front of his card.

The winning entry shows a Christmas scene with Santa flying over with Dudley Castle.

Mr Austin presented Charleigh with her chosen prize at a school assembly. He said: "It was a huge privilege to go to Bramford Primary and present her with an award for her design skills."

Runners up could choose from early Christmas gifts including a family ticket to Dudley Zoo and Castle, a family ticket to the Black Country Museum and gift vouchers for Hobbycraft.

Halesowen and Rowley Regis MP James Morris, who has been busy hitting the streets with the local Rotary club's charity sleigh, ran a contest among local school children for the sixth consecutive year and had 600 entries to sift through.

The winning card was designed by Year 6 pupil Ruby Field, from Our Lady & St Kenelm Primary School, Halesowen, and features a family gathering around a Christmas tree. Mr Morris



Aldridge-Brownhills MP Wendy Morton's card features a photograph of a wintery Pelsall Common with a gaggle of geese in the snow, taken by Steve Swain of Walsall Wood Camera Club



Another traditional Christmas card sent out by Pat McFadden and Valerie Vaz



MP James Morris, with pupil Ruby Field and her winning design

said: "This is the fifth year that I have asked local primary schools to design my Christmas card and I am always impressed with the quality and variety of entries."

"Well done to Ruby and to the runners-up, as well as to everybody who sent in such fantastic entries, and a big thank you to all of the teachers and staff who encouraged their classes to take part."

Dudley South's Tory MP Mike Wood opened up his competition to pupils at all primary and special school pupils in his constituency.

And in a novel twist, he put the best seven entries up online for members of the public to vote on. The winner was Alex Maher, a Year 5 pupil at Maidensbridge Primary School, Wall Heath, who impressed the MP with his drawing of a Robin in a Santa hat. Warley MP



Wolverhampton MP Rob Marris's traditional Christmas card

John Spellar got creative with his card this year. He used a picture of Elizabeth Tower, with a Christmas tree in the foreground, and enhanced it using Photoshop.

Aldridge-Brownhills MP Wendy Morton went with a local theme for her card. It features a photograph of a wintery Pelsall Common with a gaggle of geese wandering by through the snow.

The shot was taken by Steve Swain of Walsall Wood Camera Club, while Walsall North MP David Winnick has sent out one of the Commons' official selection cards chosen by the Commons Speaker John Bercow.

His colleague in Walsall South, Valerie Vaz, also picked a card with a parliamentary theme.

The shadow leader of the House of Commons' card features a photograph of a beau-

tifully decorated tree in Old Palace Yard with Elizabeth Tower in the background.

"It's such an iconic image," she said. "A lot of staff gave up a Sunday for free to put all the lights on the tree, which I think was a wonderful gesture."

Wolverhampton South East MP Pat McFadden sent the same card. He said: "It is a wonderful time of year, but it can get quite exhausting when you have about 700 cards to send."

Wolverhampton MP Rob Marris chose a striking image of the Houses of Parliament for his card.

Meanwhile Labour may have accused Philip Hammond of barking up the wrong tree with his Autumn Statement, but the Chancellor has shown he can bite back with an adorable card featuring his two mutts, Rex and Oscar.

## Failure to intervene in Syria a 'catastrophic failure' – MP

THE western powers not intervening in Syria represented 'a catastrophic failure' of policy that has led to dire consequences for the world, according to Black Country Tory MP.

Halesowen and Rowley Regis MP James Morris backed comments from fellow MPs that Britain should 'feel a sense of sorrow, shame and anger' about its failure to deal with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

The Commons voted against military action against Assad in August 2013, before voting to join a coalition of nations conducting airstrikes against ISIS militants in Syria last December.

Mr Morris made his comments during an emergency debate on the bloodshed that has happened in the Syrian civil war, leading to the siege of east Aleppo this month.

A group of MPs, led by Andrew Mitchell, called on the Government to pursue a ceasefire in Aleppo, where four years of vicious fighting have seen thousands killed.

Mr Mitchell argued that Britain is 'complicit' in the suffering faced by Syrians, and that humanitarian help is desperately needed.

Tory MP Mr Morris told the Commons that when historians look back on the current situation in Aleppo it will represent 'a catastrophic failure of western policy that has significantly changed the world for the worse'.

He added that it was 'inevitable' that 'a distinct reckoning will come at some point for the United Kingdom and the USA.'

The Syrian president looks likely to cling on to power in Syria, largely thanks to Russian support.



Halesowen and Rowley Regis MP James Morris speaking during the emergency debate

# Former cinema is back on the market

THERE are hopes that films could once again be shown at a former cinema on Stourbridge's Lower High Street.

The old Savoy Cinema building, which opened as a movie theatre in the 1920s, is back on the market.

The building sold in February but is now back on the market, being offered for £600,000.

It is now hoped a group will come forward with the aim of re-opening the building as a cinema.

The Savoy closed as a cinema in 1982 after more than 60 years as a picture house, originally called the Scala, and in recent decades was a club, a gym and a shop.

Stourbridge councillor Nicolas Barlow said he supported the idea of it re-opening as a cinema rather than it becoming another 'faceless' building.

He hoped it could become the focus of a campaign similar to that which saved Dudley Hippodrome and is now aiming to re-open the Castle Hill landmark as a theatre again.

Councillor Barlow said: "I know people are keen to see it re-invigorated as a niche cinema like they have in Birmingham."

"When you think of what has happened with the Hippodrome in Dudley, it would be nice if that could happen. It would be lovely but it's about getting the right people in with the right level of investment."

### Apartments

"We will have to see what the new year brings. It would be a shame if it was turned into something quite faceless like apartments."

The historic property, which contains a series of interlinked buildings, was sold for £350,000 by estate agents Walton and Hippiss in February. As well



Former Savoy cinema

# WINTER SALE

Starts  
10am Tuesday 27th December

Free storage upgrade with Silentnight



Saving up to £200 on electric beds



Many items for immediate delivery

**Myers**  
Commemorative beds

**dunlopillo**  
SPECIAL COMFORT DIVAN

**MAMMOTH**  
Prestige by Dunlopillo

**SOMNUS**  
LUXE BEDDING

all brands with big savings

Free to use customer car park at rear of store - DY5 1RG  
Proud supporters of the Mary Stevens Hospice

Upto half price bed frames

27th December 10AM- 5:30PM  
28th -30TH December 9AM- 5:30PM  
31ST December 9AM- 5PM  
1ST January 11AM- 4:30PM



Free size upgrade with Hypnos

**HYPNOS**

Over 250 Stock mattresses to clear

Double Ottoman divan set reduced to £399



Huge reductions on Floor models



# Dreamland

Mill St, Brierley Hill DY5 2RG  
01384 74166  
www.dreamlandbedding.co.uk

# 16 Band of Black Country lads had 17 top 20 hits during career



At the height of their fame, the foursome leaving for America



Slade later in their career in party mood



Fans meet Don at his first home on Green Park Road, Bilton



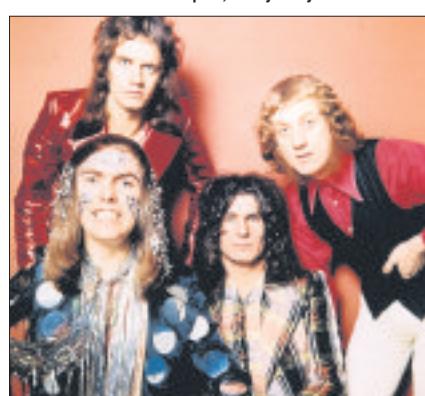
A new look after the band had left behind their skinhead days



Drummer Don Powell. Pictures: Barry Plummer



Slade at Heathrow airport, ready to fly out in 1972



Glam rock personified, with Dave Hill's glittery look

# Slade come Bak 'Ome to celebrate 50 merry years

REPORT BY JORDAN HARRIS

**BLACK** Country glam rock and roll icons Slade returned to where it all began, to look back on 50 years of glory.

They are a band synonymous with good times whose energy-packed anthems still rattle with the same electricity as when they were first released. Last Friday marked Slade's 50th anniversary, and to mark the milestone a show was held at The Robin 2, the live music venue in Bilton which has become the band's spiritual home over the years.

While the current Slade live experience might miss the inimitable howl of Noddy Holder on lead vocals, it has become a celebration of the band's spirit, which has always been one of its key features.

It certainly takes a lot of spirit for four young Black Country lads to visualise a life of Technicolor glam rock in front of them while rehearsing in Bilton.

But listening back to the early recordings, they prove they were hellbent on harnessing the escapist power of music in order to change their lives.

## Fashion

Once the band got its foot in the door, it was no stopping them.

Noddy Holder, Don Powell, Dave Hill and Jim Lea became household names, with songs such as *Take Me Bak 'Ome* and *Mama Weer All Crazee Now* taking them to the top of the charts.

However, it wasn't just the music that caught people's attention and sold millions of records. As the band racked up an incredible 17 consecutive top 20 hits, they became notorious for song title misspellings, the rock and roll attitude of its stars and a unique sense of fashion.

The greatest example of this is Noddy's famous mirrored top hat, a symbol of the excess and brashness of the times which no one else would dare attempt to pull off.

Dave Hill also indulged with fashion excesses. He favoured silver and gold outfits with massive platform boots.

The band's best-selling single, and last number one, is the festive anthem *Merry Xmas Everybody*, which has become so attached to this time of year it is hard to imagine going through December without hearing it.

In a way, it is a perfect representation of the band at their peak, an unashamedly joyful song that reaches out to the masses with open arms. Their peak years were such a blaze of glory that it was inevitable that



The band at the height of their powers in the early 1970s when they were always in the charts and on Top of the Pops almost every week



In 2002 Slade received University of Wolverhampton fellowships



Noddy leading from the front as always with an outrageous tie

a dip would come and as the world around them changed and punk arrived in the 70s, their popularity began to fade. These are the times when a band's character is truly tested, after the fame and glory, without the energy of youth on their side and drained from years of touring and partying.

It wasn't long before they were back in

the hearts and minds of the public, with a dip would come and as the world around them changed and punk arrived in the 70s, their popularity began to fade. These are the times when a band's character is truly tested, after the fame and glory, without the energy of youth on their side and drained from years of touring and partying.

It wasn't long before they were back in

I Dun in 2013 and his childhood home at Bilton was chosen for a visit by fans at a Slade convention in 2015.

But last Friday's show was all about looking back on the good times and the bad, reliving songs that are part of the Black Country's heritage, the fashion choices that continue to raise eyebrows and the connec-

# Look wot you dun boys – nearly two million sales in the UK



**IN** the UK, the band has sold a certified 520,000 albums...

Beginnings as Ambrose Slade, 1969; *Play It Loud* 1970; *Slayed* 1972; *Old New Borrowed and Blue* 1974; *Slade in Flame* 1974; *Nobody's Fools* 1976.

Whatever Happened to Slade 1977; *Return to Base* 1979; We'll Bring the House Down 1981; *Till Deaf Do Us Part* 1981.

The Amazing Kamikaze Syndrome 1983, re-released in 1984. *Rogues Gallery* 1985; Crackers – The Christmas Party Album 1985; *You Boyz Make Big*

*Noize* 1987. *Keep on Rockin'* 1994 – as *Slade II*, re-released in 2002.

**Slade sold a staggering 1.8 million singles...**

1969, *Wild Winds Are Blowing*.

1970, *Shape of Things to Come, Know Who You Are*.

1971, *Get Down and Get with It, Coz I Luv You, Look Wot You Dun*.

1972, *Take Me Bak 'Ome, Mama Weer All Crazee Now, Gudbuy T'Jane*.

1973, *Cum On Feel the Noize, Skweeze Me, Pleeze Me, My Friend Stan, Merry Xmas Everybody*.

1974, *Everyday, The Bangin' Man*,

**Far Far Away.**

1975, *How Does It Feel, Thanks for the Memory, Wham Bam Thank You Mam, In For a Penny*.

1976, *Let's Call It Quits, Nobody's Pool*.

1977, *Gypsy Roadhog, Burning in the Heat of Love, My Baby Left Me*.

1978, *Give Us a Goal, Rock 'n' Roll Bolero*.

1979, *Ginny, Ginny, I'm a Rocker, Sign of the Times, Okey Cokey*.

1981, *We'll Bring the House Down, Wheels Ain't Coming Down, Knuckle Sandwich Nancy, Lock Up Your*

**Daughters.**

1982, *Ruby Red, Rock and Roll Preacher, And Now the Waltz C'est La Vie*.

1983, *My Oh My, Cum On Feel the Noize, re-issue*.

1984, *Run Runaway, Slam the Hammer Down, All Join Hands*.

1985, *7 Year Bitch, Mysterious Mizster Jones, Little Sheila, Do You Believe in Miracles*.

1987, *Still the Same, That's What Friends Are For, You Boyz Make Big Noise, Ooh La La in LA, We Won't Give In*.

1988, *Let's Dance '88*.



One of Slade's biggest hits

# Ladies' gym wins top fitness award

A GYM for women in the Black Country has been named a winner at a prestigious fitness industry awards ceremony.

Fitness 4 Ladies in Castle Hill, Dudley, beat strong competition and was crowned Ladies Only Gym of the Year at the National Fitness Awards.

The awards, now in their seventh year, recognise excellence and achievement in the fitness business.

To scoop the trophy, the gym went through a rigorous assessment process, which involved being visited by a member of a workout team who examine all areas of the business, from member retention to customer service.

## Support

Owner Raj Kaur, said: "It's an absolute privilege to be recognized nationally for all of our hard work.

"We couldn't have done it without the support of our team and members over

the past six and a half years. It was a complete surprise when they named our gym ladies gym of the year and we're all really pleased with the win."

Awards were handed out in more 20 categories at a glittering ceremony at Leicester Athena, attended by more than 850 people and hosted by boxing legend Ricky Hatton and TV celeb Katie Bulmer-Cooke.

Judith Halkerston, National Fitness Awards' director: "This year's winners should be very, very proud.

"The high standard of entries made it a tough job to select a final shortlist never mind a winner and runner-up in each category.

"Our awards' night was a great celebration of the fitness industry as a whole and it was great to see so many gyms represented at the event.

"It was a wonderful evening and it was lovely to share in the celebrations of the winners."



The award-winning team from the Fitness 4 Ladies gym at Castle Hill, Dudley, led by business owner Raj Kaur

# Report is by 'snobbish southerners' says Tory MP

DECades of unemployment helped to turn the West Midlands into 'Britain's Brexit capital', according to a new report from an independent think-tank.

The London-based Resolution Foundation says a history of job shortages played a significant role in the huge support for Brexit across the West Midlands.

But Government Chief Whip, South Staffs MP Gavin Williamson, has branded the report 'deeply flawed'.

The analysis found that the region delivered the strongest vote to leave the EU of anywhere in the UK. Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall posted some of the biggest Leave votes nationally.

The foundation has called on the Government to 're-calibrate' its Midlands Engine project so it has more focus on boosting employment.

It claims the region entered the economic downturn with the lowest employment rate of any major UK region and employment prospects in the region only improved 'at a glacial pace' in recent years.

"The West Midlands now has the lowest employment rate of any major city region at just 64.5 per cent," the report says.

Kinver MP Mr Williamson said: "In the West Midlands we are seeing the largest growth in private sector employment in 20 years, with more and more people entering the workplace."

"The quality of employ-



Gavin Williamson MP

ment is also fantastic, with major companies such as JLR, UTC and Gestamp investing more than £1 billion into South Staffordshire and Wolverhampton.

"The findings in this report appear to be deeply flawed. It seems that this is an example of snobbish southerners deciding to make generalisations about the region. People here voted for Brexit because they had real concerns over a number of issues that impact on their futures."

# Former labourer is on course for career at sea

A 20-year-old from Dudley is on course for a career at sea having completed the first stage of his Royal Navy training.

Trainee seaman specialist Louis Ralston joined the service in October, arriving at HMS Raleigh, Cornwall, for his basic training. He has now completed an intensive 10-week course.

The former High Arcal pupil previously worked as a labourer and in a fast-food restaurant while studying at college. He said: "I joined the Royal Navy for new challenges and to travel the world. I've learnt a lot about myself."

# Minister promises more Midlands road and railway projects

THE Government is committed to boosting infrastructure in a bid to ensure the West Midlands maintains its position as a major part of the UK's economy, says Brexit Minister David Jones.

During a visit to the Black Country, Mr Jones said the Government was 'fully aware' of the need for major improvements to the region's road network, adding that key developments were in the pipeline.

He met with members of the Black Country Chamber of Commerce's Brexit Policy Group at Carvers, Wolverhampton, where his comments were welcomed by business bosses.

They urged Mr Jones to make sure the West Midlands is not left behind in Downing Street's plans for post-Brexit Britain.

## Concern

Mr Jones said: "It is clear that transport is a major area of concern in the West Midlands. We understand the importance of improvements and it is an issue that we will be looking at closely. This is particularly true for the road infrastructure, with the M6 Toll, and also upgrading routes to and from Birmingham Airport."

Mr Jones said the Government would be announcing some major developments for the West Midlands as part of a £2 billion investment for infrastructure upgrades that was announced in the Autumn Statement.

"We have got some major pieces that we are pursuing, including HS2. There will be more projects to be announced in future following consultation."

Advertisement

## PUBLIC NOTICE

**SALE STARTS 27TH DECEMBER 10.30AM  
SAVE UP TO 75%**

- **SOFAS AND CHAIRS MADE TO ORDER - ANY SIZE**
- **FREE HOME DELIVERY**
- **FREE REMOVAL OF YOUR OLD BED**
- **LARGE SELECTION OF FABRIC AND LEATHER SUITES**
- **2 & 3 SEATERS TO CLEAR FROM AN AMAZING £295 VARIOUS COLOURS AND DESIGNS**

● **SUITES** ● **BEDS**  
● **MATTRESSES** ● **SOFAS**  
*All reduced to a fraction of their normal price*  
**NO REASONABLE OFFER REFUSED**  
**UP TO £1,000 PART EXCHANGE FOR YOUR OLD SUITE**



3+1+1 SUITE  
**1 ONLY**  
WAS £1995  
NOW £595



DINING TABLE & CHAIRS  
**1 ONLY**  
WAS £595  
NOW £195



Odd Bases & Mattresses to Clear from  
**£69**

LUXURY 4 DRAWER DIVAN  
**1 ONLY**  
WAS £495  
NOW £199



**BRITISH MADE FOR QUALITY**  
Made to Measure  
Recliners and Riser Recliners Available

Your chair, designed to fit you from £495  
Matching sofas available  
1000 fabrics, 100 leathers to choose from

**Dreamworld**  
furniture

Three Piece Suites, Chairs, Beds, Carpets, Dining and Bedroom Furniture

8 Stallings Lane, Kingswinford DY6 7HU

Tel: 01384 295660

OPEN: MON-SAT 10AM - 5PM | SUN 10.30AM - 4.30PM

LARGE FREE CAR PARK



# Tips to help keep festive pot plants at their best

Hannah Stephenson offers tips on how to keep a festive favourite looking its best

POINSETTIAS are the symbol of Christmas, their traditional red bracts bringing festive cheer to the home – and now Poinsettias come in a range of colours, including light pinks and creams, which would complement more subtle decor.

Some six million plants are sold in the UK in just three weeks in the run-up to Christmas Day, with 80 per cent snapped up in the final shopping weekend, according to grower group the British Protected Ornamentals Association.

Caroline Marshall-Foster, editor of The Florist magazine, suggests an alternative way of decorating with poinsettias is to arrange a row of them in simple copper-coloured pots along the mantelpiece or the windowsill, or to dot a few potted poinsettias among lush green garlands of pine and spruce.

Celebrity florist Larry Walsh says that using metallic-coloured containers can instantly add a hint of Christmas luxury to your poinsettia.

“A bit of sparkle makes Christmas. Accessorise your arrangement with gold-leafed candles and glassware and you have the perfect festive table decoration.”

Yet so often poinsettias wilt before the Christmas guests start arriving. So, how do you keep them going?

1. Make sure you buy a healthy plant whose roots are not spilling out through the base of the pot.

Check where it is located when you buy it because plants that have been stood outdoors a long time may fail.

Unwrap them as soon as you get them home.

2. Place them in a light spot, but not in direct sunlight.

If direct sunlight hits the plant, reposition it.

Poinsettias should be kept warm, ideally between 13–22°C. Don't place them in draughts and avoid cool rooms.

3. The most common cause of failure is over-watering.

Let the upper half of the compost become dry before watering thoroughly.

This may mean letting the water drain away and then watering it again.

Don't let them stand in water.

4. Mist the leaves frequently as poinsettias (Euphorbia pulcherrima), which are native to Mexico and Central America, need moist air.

5. If your poinsettia starts to wilt and is as dry as a bone, soak the rootball in warm water, which may revive it.

As well as the traditional red varieties, you can also buy poinsettias in pink and white or with lighter green leaves. Try the stunning white Poinsettia 'Pure White', a new addition to the Thomson & Morgan range (£14.99, [www.thompson-morgan.com](http://www.thompson-morgan.com)) or

the popular cream type 'Regina'.

If poinsettias just don't take your fancy and you'd like to try something new, alternatives include the Christmas cactus, hellebore and orchid. Two new orchids, Phalaenopsis Purple Princess – a dainty type with two to three flower spikes which produce a spray of 3–4cm mauve flowers – and Phalaenopsis 'Kleopatra 4' – which has cream flowers with intensely deep purple spots – have recently received the RHS Award of Garden Merit.

For more information on poinsettias, visit [www.christmas-star.info](http://www.christmas-star.info)

## BEST OF THE BUNCH – Euonymus

This evergreen shrub is another Christmas must-have, its bright berries adding festive cheer to a plethora of indoor decorations.

But it is also a valuable shrub in the garden and you can get unusual and more decorative varieties including variegated types with gold or silver-splashed green foliage, as well as types with yellow, orange or black berries.

Nearly all types are male or female, so you'll need one of each to ensure berries unless you have neighbours who also grow holly in close proximity in their garden.

The most popular type, *Ilex aquifolium*, is an upright shrub with 5–10cm long leaves. The male variety 'Golden Queen' offers green leaves with gold splashes, while the female 'Argentea Marginata' has white-edged leaves. Holly will thrive in any reasonable garden soil in full sun or partial shade. If you are growing holly as a hedge, trim it in spring.









Euonymus will grow in all sorts of soils in both sun and partial shade

# All-year shrub will bring colour to winter gardens

## BEST OF THE BUNCH – Euonymus

WHILE the deciduous varieties of euonymus, such as *E. alatus*, grown for its red autumn foliage, evergreen varieties of this shrub are invaluable, both to add all-year interest in the border and as a great contrasting feature in winter pots, alongside winter heathers, pansies and dwarf conifers.

Euonymus will grow in all sorts of soils in both sun and partial shade. Variegated types are the most noticeable, including *E. japonicus 'Aureopictus'*, which has yellow leaves with a green rim and *'Ovatus Aureus'*, which has a yellow rim. As well as making great ground cover plants, some types can be used as climbers, clinging like ivy, such as the silver-edged variety *E. fortunei 'Silver Queen'*, which reaches up to 3m (10ft) against a wall, while other tall-growing specimens can be used for hedging. Variegated types prefer full sun and little or no pruning is required.

## GOOD ENOUGH TO EAT - Windowsill herbs

YOUR herb garden may be looking a bit sorry for itself at this time of year, but you can still

have the fresh taste of herbs by growing some on your windowsill indoors.

If you have mint or chives in the garden, dig up some roots to force on a warm windowsill. Soon enough, they will start growing again. For a really easy life, buy pots of fresh herbs from the supermarket and they should keep growing if you water them and keep cutting them little and often. It's also easy to grow herbs indoors from seed, including annuals such as chervil, coriander, basil and parsley. Just sow them thinly in pots and let them grow.

## WHAT TO DO THIS WEEK

Plant bare-root and container grown roses and transplant any established roses you want to resite.

Create an inexpensive hedge by taking hardwood cuttings and inserting them directly into the growing site.

Prune autumn-flowering shrubs over three years old as they finish flowering.

Drain surface pumps in the pond and have them serviced if necessary. Or else clean, dry and grease before storing.

# Planning ahead is sure to bring rich rewards

By Hannah Stephenson

**CREATING a vegetable patch, whether on a large piece of ground or within a smaller raised bed, can bring rich rewards if you plan carefully.**

Growing compatible crops together is likely to reap richer harvests, while not treading soil from one bed to another and keeping your tools clean between use will help keep soil healthy and reduce the likelihood of the spread of pests and diseases.

The idea behind crop rotation is that you avoid planting the same crop in the same bit of ground more than one year in four to stop root diseases building up and to make the most of resources such as manure, which is only needed for certain crops but not for others (like root crops).

Crops which can be grown together include legumes (peas and beans), comprising peas and broad, French and runner beans; the onion family, including garlic, leeks, onions, shallots and spring onions; roots and tubers, including carrots, parsnips, beetroot, potatoes and tomatoes; and brassicas (cabbage family), featuring Brussels sprouts, cabbages, Chinese greens, pak choi, radish, cauliflowers, swedes and turnips.

Green veg which require regular watering can be separated from less thirsty root crops; lettuces are often grown with cabbage family crops as they need organic matter, nitrogen fertiliser and regular watering.

Perennial veg like rhubarb and asparagus beds are best kept out of crop rotation beds.

## Nutrients

Squeeze quick-growing crops of lettuce and other salad leaves wherever they will fit, using them as a catch crop between slower-growing types such as winter brassicas.

By swapping the main groups of vegetables around in a regular order, you can make best use of the nutrients in the soil because different crops need different amounts of nutrients.

If you're starting a new plot or creating raised vegetable beds, prepare the ground thoroughly, digging to break up compacted soil and weeding thoroughly.

Then add bulky organic matter before planting season starts. It may be better to do this in spring, using compost as a surface mulch.

If you have an existing vegetable plot, dig it over each winter, inverting lumps of soil to bury annual weeds, but leave the clods intact. Frost and rain will break them down and leave a crumbly soil by spring.

On light, sandy soils, wait until spring before digging. Sandy soils may also need liming regularly to give them a neutral pH. If in doubt, buy a soil tester to test the pH of your soil.

The four-year rotation is a good technique which is easy to plan. Divide your plot into four separate sections if you have space, and then operate a four-year rotation on each.



The idea behind crop rotation is that you avoid planting the same crop in the same bit of ground more than one year in four



If you have an existing vegetable plot, dig it over each winter



Keeping tools clean will help keep soil healthy

A typical example might be:

## Year One

Plot A - potatoes  
Plot B - pea family  
Plot C - Cabbage family  
Plot D - onions and roots.

## Year Two

Plot A - pea family  
Plot B - cabbage family  
Plot C - onions and roots  
Plot D - potatoes

## Year Three

Plot A - cabbage family  
Plot B - onions and roots  
Plot C - potatoes  
Plot D - pea family

## Year Four

Plot A - onions and roots  
Plot B - potatoes  
Plot C - pea family  
Plot D - cabbage family

On smaller plots, conventional crop rota-

tion is not practical, so just aim not to grow the same crop on the same patch of ground any more often than you need to.

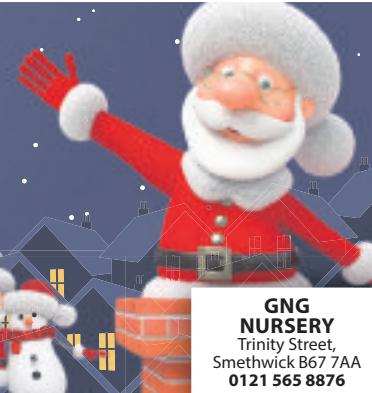
Separate the main crop groups as far as possible.

Grow potatoes, onions and the cabbage family on a different area each year and fit other crops around them.

Keep a yearly plan as to what crops you have grown where – and you won't go far wrong.

**The Local Businesses appearing on this page  
would like to wish all of our readers a very**

# **“Happy Christmas”**



**WEST TIMBER & STEEL**  
Rear of 64 High Street,  
West Bromwich B70 6JT  
0121 553 0666

**FIREPLACE FACTORY DIRECT**  
Unit 12, Parkrose Ind. Estate,  
Middlemore Rd,  
Smethwick B66 2DZ  
0121 558 8265  
[www.fireplacefactorydirect.co.uk](http://www.fireplacefactorydirect.co.uk)

**GNG NURSERY**  
Trinity Street,  
Smethwick B67 7AA  
0121 565 8876

**WEST MIDLANDS DOUBLE GLAZING LTD**  
77 Overend St.,  
West Bromwich B70 6EY  
0121 532 0784



**TRINITY FUNERAL SERVICES LTD**  
Church Hill Street,  
Smethwick B67 7AH  
0121 558 3242



**INSPIRATIONAL FIRES**  
406 Bearwood Road,  
Smethwick B66 4EX  
0121 429 3186



**COMPLETE KIDZ**  
Unit 2 & 3 Elm Court,  
Smethwick B66 1RB  
0121 552 2006  
[www.completekidz.co.uk](http://www.completekidz.co.uk)



**STONY LANE CHIPPY**  
142 Stony Lane,  
Smethwick B67 7BB



**FLAVOURZ WORLD BUFFET**  
Wolverhampton Road,  
Oldbury B68 8LQ  
0121 552 0041

**BRUNSWICK PUB**  
Crankhill Lane,  
Wednesbury WS10 0QQ  
0121 502 4939



**PRINCES END GARAGE**  
71 High Street, Princes End,  
Tipton DY4 9JF  
0121 557 2370



**RUSSELL SKIPS**  
89 William Street,  
West Bromwich  
B70 0BG  
07721 387990



**CHAPMANS CHIPPY**  
32 Whitehall Road,  
West Bromwich B70 0HE  
0121 557 1407



**CAREWISH LTD**  
136 Halesowen Road,  
Cradley Heath  
B64 5LP  
01384 566945



**CHAPMANS ELECTRICAL SERVICES**  
112-119 Reddall Hill Road,  
Cradley Heath B64 5JN  
01384 566497

**AA DOMESTICS**  
The Cornbow Centre,  
Halesowen  
(Ground Floor)



**CAKE EMPORIUM**  
3 Hagley Road, Halesowen  
B63 4PU  
Closed 23rd December -  
Re-open 4th January 2017  
0121 448 2494



**HUGHES THE BUTCHERS**  
12a Market Place,  
Wednesbury WS10 7AX  
0121 556 9696



**WONDERLAND DAY NURSERY**  
57 Hollyhead Road,  
Wednesbury WS10 7DF  
0121 556 6222



**MIDLAND PET SUPPLIES**  
145 Potters Lane,  
Wednesbury WS10 0AT  
0121 556 1497



**WEDNESBURY MARKSMEN**  
Perry Street,  
Wednesbury WS10 0AX  
0121 556 9658

**OAKWOOD LODGES**  
Llwynybraed, Rhayader  
LD6 5NT  
01597 811422



**ANGLE RING CO. LTD**  
Bloomfield Road, Tipton  
DY4 9EH  
0121 557 7241



**SANDWELL VOLUNTEER BUREAU**  
Municipal Buildings,  
Oldbury  
0121 544 8326  
[www.volunteercentresandwell.org.uk](http://www.volunteercentresandwell.org.uk)

**ELITE LEGAL**  
Road Traffic Accidents  
£200 paid for every referral  
0121 429 4503  
07527 787050

**DAVID WITHERS BUTCHERS**  
1 St. Kenelm's Road,  
Romsley B62 0NU



**GB PHONES**  
Sell - Repair - Unlock  
58 Great Bridge, Tipton  
DY4 7EW  
0121 557 8899



**JORDANS SOLICITORS**  
Halesowen - Blackheath  
0121 585 3900 0121 559 2922  
[www.jordans-solicitors.co.uk](http://www.jordans-solicitors.co.uk)



**BENNETTS CARIBBEAN**  
125c Grainger Lane,  
Cradley Heath B64 6AH



**NAJRAN BUILDING & FENCING SUPPLIES**  
194-196 Springhill B18 7BS  
0121 456 3555  
07930 396620



**HAWTHORN WINDOWS**  
Unit 1, Shenstone  
Trading Estate,  
Bromsgrove Road,  
Halesowen B63 3XB



**STUART AND THE TEAM FROM JEALOUSI**  
308 Brecon View Road,  
West Bromwich B71 3NX  
0121 588 2041

**NICKIS FISH BAR**  
9 Woodbury Road,  
Halesowen  
0121 421 1394



**MOSS REPAIRS**  
250 Coombes Road,  
Halesowen B62 8AA  
07875 345783



# fasttheticket

## Simply having a wonderful pantomime

See Page 22



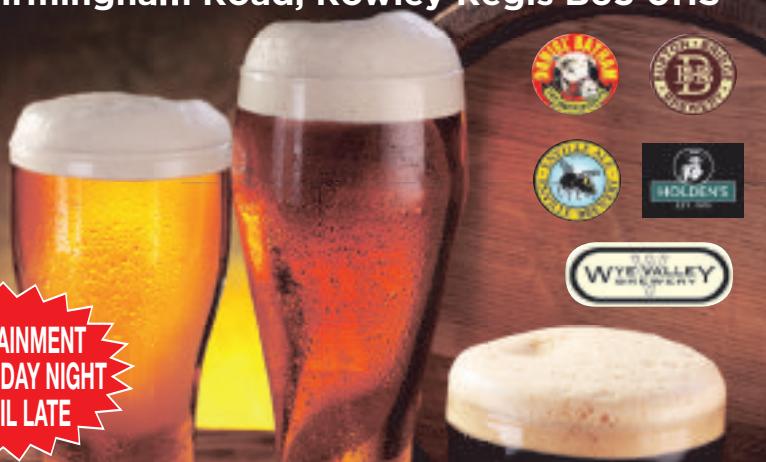
**NATIVE  
MONSTER**  
Entertainment Unleashed



For full listings see **Express & Star** every Friday

### SHOULDER OF MUTTON

65 Birmingham Road, Rowley Regis B65 0HS



### CHRISTMAS OPENING HOURS

Christmas Eve  
10am - 12am  
(Karaoke 8pm till late)

Christmas Day

11am - 2pm

Boxing Day

12pm - 11pm

New Year's Eve,

Day 10am - 4pm

New Year's Eve,

Night 7pm - Late

(Karaoke/Disco - Till late)

Selection of Real Ales including:  
Bathams, Burton Bridge,  
Envilles, Holdens,  
Wye Valley and many more!

SHOULDER OF MUTTON  
LOYALTY CARD

10p back for every £1.00 spent on your loyalty card

### JOIN OUR NEW LOYALTY CARD SCHEME

10p back for every £1.00 spent

Ask inside for more details

Terms and conditions apply. Card for illustration purposes only.

## Olde Queen's Head



## CHRISTMAS DAY CARVERY LUNCH

SUNDAY 25th DECEMBER

BOOKINGS NOW BEING TAKEN

12pm - 2pm £40.00 Adults 3 Course Lunch £15.00 Children  
A deposit of £20 per adult and £10 per child required on booking

0121 585 8228

Birmingham Street, Halesowen B63 3HN

AUTHENTIC HOUSE OF MEDITERRANEAN  
AND MODERN EUROPEAN CUISINENOW OPEN  
Get Your FREE  
Capuccino  
with this advert

215 Halesowen Road, Old Hill B64 0NE • 01384 410100

## THE ADULT SHOP

Back under the old management

Toys • Novelties • DVDs

- Male & Female Toys in Stock
- Herbal Enhancement Pills
- Male and Female Pills in Stock
- Competitive Prices
- Special Orders on Request!

10% OFF  
all orders  
over £10019 Cradley Road, Cradley Heath B64 6AG  
01384 412070  
Open Times: Mon-Wed 10am-7pm • Thurs-Fri 10am-8pm  
Sat 10am-7pm • Sunday Closed Over 18s onlyTo advertise here please  
call Daniel Eccles on  
01384 353227

Ian Adams' superb Widow Twankey wore a succession of outrageous costumes that seemed to defy gravity



Most of the laughs come courtesy of Adam C Booth as Aladdin's brother, the accident-prone Wishee Washee

## Am yam ready? Panto fun wish has come true

**WHAT a Grand panto... oh yes it is! If you're looking for a festive feast of fun with magical music and tremendous tricks, then the Grand's genie of the lamp will make your wish come true.**

It is without doubt the Lichfield Street theatre's best seasonal show for years with a perfect balance of TV talent and seasoned stage performers.

And a star is born... she yam what she yam-yam but 'lazy' Doreen Tipton comes close to stealing the show as the Empress of China. Apparently she had to apply for the

Empress job to keep her benefits and was rather dismayed to get the gig.

Sometimes it means she has to get up before 2pm or miss the Jeremy Kyle show.

With a Black Country accent so thick it could plug the cut, she was an instant hit with panto-goers.

And I suspect Gill Jordan's comic creation will be in demand in panto land (at least in the West Midlands) for years to come.

Joe McElderry is a suitably handsome and dashing Aladdin, and those who saw him on The X Factor, Popstar To Operastar or on stage in Joseph know he has an excellent singing voice.

Further fine vocals come from Britain's Got Talent fi-

nalist Lucy Kay as Princess Jasmine and Neal Wright as an American-accented Genie of the Lamp.

Most of the laughs come courtesy of Adam C Booth as Aladdin's brother, the accident-prone Wishee Washee, and Ian Adams' superb Widow Twankey.

The scene where the pair get shrunk in the wash was priceless. As Aladdin's washer woman mom, Adams wore a succession of outrageous costumes that seemed to defy gravity.

And all three of the Twankeys did defy gravity on a stunning magic carpet scene in which Aladdin loops the loop over the heads of a marvelling audience.

Stefan Pejic's Abanazar is an eminently hissable villain in the boozing Tom Baker mode, gold-clad Lisa Riley makes for a wisecracking ballroom-dancing Slave of the Ring and CBeebies favourite Ben Faulks is the slapstick PC Ping Pong.

Add a troupe of energetic dancers and a soundtrack full of pop and showtune favourites, and you've got one Christmas cracker of a show.

It's on at the Grand until January 22.  
LEON BURAKOWSKI



A star is born... she yam what she yam-yam but 'lazy' Doreen Tipton comes close to stealing the show as the Empress of China



Neal Wright as an American-accented Genie of the Lamp

# Snowbody could better this duet

THE Snowman returns to Birmingham Repertory Theatre in the New Year to delight young and old alike from January 11 to 15, with its wonderful mix of storytelling, spectacle, music and magic.

For the first time this year the show will feature a new recording of the iconic song Walking in the Air in which the adult Aled Jones duets with his younger self, in a new arrangement by composer Howard Blake.

The new arrangement features on Aled's latest album One Voice at Christmas, which recently reached number one in the Classic FM charts, and will now also feature in The Snowman on stage.

Aled Jones said: "Walking in the Air caps off such a great year for me and I'm thrilled to give it a new lease of life. Who knows, maybe we'll get to the top of the Christmas chart again!"

Howard Blake said: "This is a unique theatrical event whereby through the wonders of technology one can hear Aled at the age of 12 singing with Aled as the tenor he is now. I am delighted that we can include it in the show."

Based on the book by Raymond Briggs and the film directed by Diane Jackson, the stage show has transported generations of children and their families into the wintery world of a boy and his magical snowman.

The Birmingham Rep production features music and lyrics by Howard Blake performed by a live orchestra,



The Snowman at Birmingham Rep is a traditional wintertime family treat choreography by Robert North, direction by Bill Alexander, design by Ruari Murchison and lighting by Tim Mitchell.

The enchanting show tells the story of a young boy's adventures when his snowman comes miraculously to life on Christmas Eve. Featuring a daz-

zing array of colourful characters including dancing penguins, magical reindeer, a beautiful snow princess, her wicked beau Jack Frost and of course, Father Christmas himself.

The Snowman is a Christmas treat for all the family and a perfect introduction to theatre for the very young.

## Fuller sound for Fall Girl

A SINGER-SONGWRITER has released her first self-produced album. Michelle Sciarrotta, who performs under the name Fall Girl, released debut album Arcana on digital platforms including iTunes, Spotify and Amazon this month.

She says the 11-track album, which was recorded, written and produced in her home studio, gave her a chance to experiment with different styles.

It acts as an expansion to her stripped back live sets, with songs she performs in front of audiences using just her voice and acoustic guitar fleshed out with keyboards, drums and more.

Michelle, originally from Coventry, said: "This has been the first major project I have put together on my own, which is something I have quite enjoyed. It is daunting, because there are times when you miss working with other people. But what you get is the clearest representation of the sound you want in your head, it is less of a committee thing."

### Record

Michelle is a classically-trained musician who makes her living from performing, not only as Fall Girl but under her own name with a covers set, as well as working with other musicians including former Wolfsbane rocker Blaze Bayley.

A launch event for physical copies of Arcana was held at record shop Vinyl & Vintage, on Cleveland Street in Wolverhampton. Michelle will play her final show of the year as Fall Girl on December 27 at The Jam House in Birmingham. For more information on Fall Girl, visit [www.facebook.com/fallgirlmusic](http://www.facebook.com/fallgirlmusic) or see [fallgirl.net](http://fallgirl.net)



## Make arena dates with rock legends

CLASSIC rock fans can add major gigs in Birmingham to their 2017 diaries. School's Out rocker Alice Cooper will be at the Barclaycard Arena on November 14 with The Mission and The Tubes. Before that, his shock rock rivals Kiss, fronted by Gene Simmons, play the Barclaycard Arena on May 8.

Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow are at the NEC Genting Arena on June 28 and his former colleagues bring Deep Purple to the Barclaycard Arena on November 17. The Who perform Tommy and more at the Barclaycard Arena April 12 and Black Sabbath say farewell at the Genting Arena on February 2 and 4.

## Osmonds join Brum festivities

JIMMY Osmond brings his brothers Merrill and Jay to Birmingham Town Hall on Friday in tribute to the late crooner Andy Williams, who launched The Osmonds with his Christmas Extravaganza TV shows.

The festive variety show will also feature Britain's Got Talent ventriloquist Steve Hewlett and singer Charlie Green.

Also on Friday night, singers Laura Tebbutt and Tim Howar join Capital Voices and London Concert Orchestra for White Christmas at the Symphony Hall. The same venue hosts Christmas By Candlelight with the Mozart Festival Orchestra on Christmas Eve afternoon.

## Musical nostalgia with tribute bands

GET the festivities going with the sounds of three decades ago with tribute act Kick Up The 80s at Bilston's Robin 2 venue on Friday. Or join The Upbeat Beatles for a Christmas Eve tribute to the Fab Four at the Robin on Saturday.

Also coming up at the Mount Pleasant venue are Thin Lizzy tribute Limehouse Lizzy on Boxing Day night, ska legends Bad Manners on Tuesday and The Dirty DC tribute to Aussie rockers AC/DC on Wednesday.

Turn the clock back to Madchester in the 90s for a triple tribute featuring Definitely Maybe, Adored and Happy Mondays on Thursday (Dec 29).

**Great Bar... Great Food... Knights Quest Great Entertainment...**

**THUR 22/12/16**  
STARMAKERS KARAOKE

**FRI 23/12/16**  
JAMES WYTHES

**SAT 24/12/16**  
STARMAKERS CHRISTMAS PARTY (TICKETS ONLY)

**SUN 25/12/16**  
CLOSED ON THE EVENING

**MON 26/12/16**  
BENS DISCO & KARAOKE

**TUE 27/12/16**  
PREDATORS KARAOKE

**WED 28/12/16**  
YANA!

**THURSDAY 29/12/16**  
PREDATORS KARAOKE

**NEW YEARS EVE**  
SCOTT BENCH TAYLOR (TICKETS ONLY)

**DRESS CODE... Dress to Impress!**

**DAILY CARVERY Only £3.45**

**We also serve GREAT STEAK & GRILL DEALS**

**SUNDAY CARVERY Only £4.95**

**It's Great Down the Pub!**

**High Street, Blackheath**

**Tel: 0121 561 5599**

**MON-THURS : 12.00-2.30PM, 6-8PM | FRI-SAT 12.00-2.30PM**

**Find us at [www.theknightsquest.co.uk](http://www.theknightsquest.co.uk)**

We serve until 1am on Sundays, Midnight Monday-Wednesday, 1am Thursday, 2am Friday & Saturday DOORS CLOSE 11.00 pm Thurs, Fri, Sat, Sun

Bari and the staff at the Bangla Lounge would like to wish all old and new customers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

**LIMITED TIME Offers**

**NEW YEAR SPECIAL**

**FRIDAY & SATURDAY NIGHT BANQUETING OFFERS**

**ANY STARTERS**

**ANY MAIN COURSE**

**RICE OR NAAN OR VEG SIDE DISH**

**ICE CREAM & COFFEE**

**£13.95 per person**

T&Cs apply

**SURCHARGE FOR FISH AND KING PRAWN**

T&Cs apply

**bangla LOUNGE RESTAURANT**

**67-69 HIGH STREET, HALESOWEN, WEST MIDLANDS, B63 3BQ**

**[www.banglaloungehalesowen.co.uk](http://www.banglaloungehalesowen.co.uk) TEL: 0121 585 7020 / 501 3816**

## CHOICE



Shirley Bassey

## David Walliams Celebrates Dame Shirley Bassey (BBC1, 9pm)

They say that parody is the highest form of flattery. If that's the case, Shirley Bassey should be thrilled to bits by the way in which David Walliams and Matt Lucas paid homage to her during their late-1990s show Rock Profiles - Lucas played the great Dame as a diva claiming to have had more hits than she actually has. Not that the girl from Tiger Bay is exactly short of career-defining songs, having performed three 007 title numbers as well as plenty of other show-stopping tunes (her rendition of Big Spender remains definitive, for instance). She turns 80 in January, and to celebrate that landmark, she shares the stage with Walliams, one of her biggest fans.

## BBC1

**6.00 Breakfast.** **10.00 Saturday Kitchen.** **11.30 Film:** A Christmas Carol. (2009) **1.00 BBC News:** Weather. **1.15 Winter: Earth's Seasonal Secrets.** **2.15 Film:** The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian. (2008) **4.30 Shrek the Halls.** (R) **4.50 Film:** Penguins of Madagascar. (2014) **6.15 BBC News.** **6.25 Regional Programme.** **6.30 Pointless Celebrities.** Alexander Armstrong and Richard Osman present a Christmas special of the general knowledge quiz, with Lesley Joseph, Duncan James, Faye Tozer, Bobby Davro and Joe Pasquale. **7.25 Michael McIntyre's Big Christmas Show.** Michael puts a festive spin on his weekend variety entertainment show with live performances by Alfie Boe, Michael Ball, Catherine Tate and Harry Enfield. **8.25 EastEnders.** Phil is given some tough news by both Shirley and Denise. Linda receives devastating family news and Dot closes up for the final time. Donna is touched by a dinner invitation. **9.00 David Walliams Celebrates Dame Shirley Bassey.** The comedy actor hosts this special evening of entertainment in which the veteran singer performs some of her best-loved songs and looks back on her 60 years in showbusiness. **10.05 Peter Kay's Christmas Comedy Shuffle.** A festive collection of clips from the comedian's TV career, featuring highlights from Car Share and Phoenix Nights, as well as a seasonal singalong with Paul McCartney. **10.50 The Vicar of Dibley.** Alice suggests an unconventional nativity play starring herself and Hugo as Mary and Joseph, and adds an extra touch of authenticity by going into labour mid-performance. (R) **11.30 BBC News:** Weather; National Lottery Update. **11.45 Midnight Mass:** **St Chad's Birmingham.** The Most Rev Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham, leads a Christmas Eve Midnight Mass broadcast live from St Chad's Cathedral. **1.00 Film:** Surviving Christmas. (2004) **2.25 Weather** for the Week Ahead. **2.30 BBC News.**

## BBC2

**6.15 Film:** Mars Needs Moms. (2011) Animated sci-fi adventure, with the voice of Seth Robert Dusky. **7.40 The NFL Show.** (R) **8.10 Film:** Hans Christian Andersen. (1952) Musical, starring Camilla Karén. (R) **9.00 Film:** (1951) Wallace & Gromit: A Close Shave. (R) **11.30 Nigel's Christmas Kitchen.** (R) **12.00 The Cook Who Changed Our Lives.** (R) **1.00 Film:** Splash! (1984) Romantic fantasy comedy, with Tom Hanks and Daryl Hannah. **2.45 Snow Chick: A Penguin's Tale.** (R) **3.45 Gorilla Family and Me.** (R) **4.45 Gorilla Family and Me.** (R) **5.45 Gorillas from King's.** **7.00 Dad's Army.** The platoon challenges a rival regiment to a gruelling duel, involving map-reading, initiative tests, river-crossing and field-fighting, to prove they are fitter and better trained than any other troop. Vintage comedy with the bumbling Home Guard of Walmington-on-Sea, starring Arthur Lowe, John Le Mesurier and Ian Lavender. (R) **8.00 Alan Bennett's Diaries.** A candid profile of the writer, following him in his home village in Yorkshire, to his community library in Primrose Hill and during a trip to New York. In a series of intimate encounters filmed over the period of a year, he reflects on his modest beginnings and his enduring gratitude to a woman who helped him for his education and looked after his parents in their old age. **9.00 Filter: The Lady in the Van.** (2015) Premieres. The true story of writer Alan Bennett's friendship with an eccentric homeless woman, whom he befriended in the 1970s before allowing her to park her dilapidated Bedford van outside his Camden home, where she ended up staying for 15 years. Comedy-drama, starring Maggie Smith, Alex Jennings, Roger Allam and Jim Broadbent. **10.40 The National Lottery Live.** The all-important winning numbers are revealed. **10.50 Christmas TOTP2 Special.** Mark Radcliffe presents festive performances from the Top of the Pops archive, including classics by Slade, Mungo, Wizzard, East 17, Mud, the Jackson 5 and Johnny Mathis. (R) **11.30 Film:** Viva Las Vegas. (1964) **1.40 Sign Zone:** Countryfile. (R) **2.40 Hobby City.** (R) **3.40 This Is BBC Two.** Preview of upcoming programmes.

## ITV

**6.00 CITV:** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. **6.20 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures.** (R) **6.35 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures.** (R) **6.45 Super 4.** (R) **6.55 Signed Stories.** (R) **7.05 Sooty.** (R) **7.10 The Big Bang Theory.** (R) **7.25 Nordic & Masters.** (R) **7.45 Noddy & Monsters.** (R) **7.55 Horrid Henry.** (R) **8.10 Horrid Henry.** (R) **8.25 Weekend at Christmas.** **9.25 Thunderbirds Are Go.** **9.30 The Chase.** (R) **10.50 You've Been Framed!** With Bells On. (R) **11.20 Film:** Despicable Me. (2010) **1.20 ITV News:** Weather. **1.30 Film:** Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone. (2001) Fantasy adventure, starring Daniel Radcliffe. **4.20 Film:** One Hundred and One Dalmatians. (1961) Disney animated adventure, with the voice of Betty Lou Gerson. **6.00 Regional Programme:** Weather. **6.15 ITV News:** Weather. **6.30 Blankety Blank.** David Walliams presents a one-off special revival of the 1970s game show in which contestants and a panel of celebrities must identify the missing word in a phrase. **7.30 Coronation Street.** Aidan admits to Johnny he is in love with Maria while she heads to court, and Nick feels left out as Peter and Leanne reflect on old times. **8.00 Birds of a Feather.** Sharon, Tracey and Doreen head to Morocco to track down Traviss when he goes missing while on his gap year. Comedy, starring Pauline Quirk, Linda Robson and Lesley Joseph. **9.00 Grantham Christmas Special.** It's the week before Christmas. And Sidney and Georgie are drawn into a case with echoes of an unsolved murder from nine years previously when a bride-to-be reports the disappearance of her groom on their wedding day. Drama set in the 1950s, starring James Norton, Robson Green, Morven Christie and Al Weaver. **10.30 Through the Keyhole.** Keith Lemon hosts a Christmas special of the game show, as celebrity panelists Shayne Ward, Kelly Brook and Johnnie Vegas are asked to identify the homes of the rich and famous. **11.30 ITV News:** Weather. **11.45 Christmas Carols on ITV.** Aled Jones joins the congregation of St Chad's church in Rochdale. **12.40 All Star Mr & Mrs Christmas Special.** (R) **1.30 Film:** Carry On Loving. (1970) **3.05 ITV Nightscreen.**

## CHANNEL 4

**6.15 Olive, the Other Reindeer.** (R) **7.05 Film:** A Turtle's Tale: Sammy's Adventures. (2010) **8.40 Father Christmas.** (R) **9.10 Painting the Bear Hunt.** **9.15 Christmas Brunch:** **12.15 Jingle Bell Jamboree.** (R) **1.15 The Simpsons.** (R) **2.15 The Simpsons.** (R) **2.45 The Simpsons.** (R) **3.15 The Simpsons.** (R) **4.45 The Snowman.** (R) **5.50 Film:** The Muppet Christmas Carol. (1992) Puppet comedy, starring Michael Caine. **7.30 We're Going on a Bear Hunt.** Animated adventure, based on Michael Rosen's popular children's story of the same name, featuring the voices of Olivia Colman, Pam Ferris and Mark Williams. **8.00 Gogglebox's Christmas Special.** Young TV viewers appraise the year's television programmes in this festive edition, from big news stories about the American Presidential election to TV's most popular hits, including Strictly Come Dancing, First Dates and Planet Earth II. **9.00 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown Christmas Special.** Jimmy Carr hosts a festive edition of the comedy panel show, with guests Howard Jordan, Sean Lock and Jon Richardson. With Joe Lycett and Joe Wilkinson. **10.00 Rude Tube Christmas Cracker.** 2016. **1.20 Film:** Santa Paws 2: The Santa Paws 2 (2012) **3.35 Film:** Mickey's Twice Upon a Christmas. (2004) **4.00 The Smurfs:** A Christmas Carol. **4.25 You've Been Framed!** at Christmas. **5.55 Catchphrase Christmas Special.** **6.30 Film:** The Polar Express. (2004) **6.45 Film:** The Santa Clause. (2003) **7.15 Family Guy:** **12.15 American Dad!** **1.40 Celebrity Juice Christmas Special.** (2005) **4.20 Educating Joey Essex:** What Are You Sleighting? **5.05** **5.30 Christmas Bonkers:** **World Records Records 5.50 ITV2 Nightscreen.**

## CHANNEL 5

**6.00 Milkshake!** **8.30 SpongeBob SquarePants.** **9.05 Film:** Doctor Zhivago. (1965) **12.50 Film:** The Vikings. (1958) Historical adventure, starring Kirk Douglas and Tony Curtis. **3.05 Film:** Jason and the Argonauts. (1983) Fantasy adventure, starring Tom Armstrong. **5.10 Film:** Scrooge - A Christmas Carol. (1951) Charles Dickens' fantasy, starring Alastair Sim. **6.55 Andre Rieu: Christmas in London.** A festive concert given by the Dutch violinist and the Johann Strauss Orchestra in 2015, featuring Christmas carols, popular classical pieces and songs including Leonard Cohen's Hallelujah and the Concierto de Aranjuez. **8.00 The Yorkshire Vet at Christmas.** The veterinary documentary series concludes with a festive trip to Skeldale. Elderly farmer, Jimmy Carr hosts a festive edition of the comedy panel show, with guests Howard Jordan, Sean Lock and Jon Richardson. With Joe Lycett and Joe Wilkinson. **10.00 Rude Tube Christmas Cracker.** 2016. **1.20 Film:** Santa Paws 2 (2012) **3.35 Film:** Mickey's Twice Upon a Christmas. (2004) **4.00 The Smurfs:** A Christmas Carol. **4.25 You've Been Framed!** at Christmas. **5.55 Catchphrase Christmas Special.** **6.30 Film:** The Polar Express. (2004) **6.45 Film:** The Santa Clause. (2003) **7.15 Family Guy:** **12.15 American Dad!** **1.40 Celebrity Juice Christmas Special.** (2005) **4.20 Educating Joey Essex:** What Are You Sleighting? **5.05** **5.30 Christmas Bonkers:** **World Records Records 5.50 ITV2 Nightscreen.**

## DIGITAL

**BBC Four** **7.00 All Aboard!** The Sleigh Ride **9.00 Top of the Pops Christmas Hits** **10.30 Roy Orbison:** One of the Nine **11.30 Steptoe and Son** **12.15 Top of the Pops:** 1962 **1.25 Shirley Bassey** at the BBC **2.25 Top of the Pops 3.55 Close** **ITV2** **11.50 The Nation's Favourite Disney Song** **12.50 Film:** Santa Paws 2: The Santa Pups (2012) **2.35 Film:** Mickey's Twice Upon a Christmas. (2004) **4.00 The Smurfs:** A Christmas Carol. **4.25 You've Been Framed!** at Christmas. **5.55 Catchphrase Christmas Special.** **6.30 Film:** The Polar Express. (2004) **6.45 Film:** The Santa Clause. (2003) **7.15 Family Guy:** **12.15 American Dad!** **1.40 Celebrity Juice Christmas Special.** (2005) **4.20 Educating Joey Essex:** What Are You Sleighting? **5.05** **5.30 Christmas Bonkers:** **World Records Records 5.50 ITV2 Nightscreen.** **ITV3** **11.45 Film:** Columbo: The Conspirators (1978) **1.50 Hans Christian Andersen: My Life as a Fairy Tale** **3.50 The Sound of Music Live** **6.30 The Making of the Sound of Music Live** **7.00 Lewis 9.00 It'll Be Alright on the Night** **10.00 Michael Flatley: A Night to Remember** **11.00 The Suspicions of Mr Whicker** **1.05 Inspector Morse 3.00 Hans Christian Andersen: My Life as a Fairy Tale** **4.40 The Darling Buds of May** **5.35 ITV3 Nightscreen** **ITV4** **12.10 Film:** The Searchers (1956) **1.20 FTV Daily** **1.25 Film:** The Searchers (1956) **2.30 Film:** The Horse Soldiers (1959) **5.00 Film:** Rio Bravo (1959) **7.50 Film:** Cannonball Run II (1984) **10.00 Film:** The Devil's Advocate (1997) **11.25 Film:** Road (2014) **3.00 Hell on Wheels** **3.45 ITV4 Nightscreen** **3.50 Tommy Cooper** **4.15 The Professionals** **5.10 Minder** **E4** **11.55 Film:** Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules (2011) **2.00 Father Christmas 2.35** **Prep & Landing 3.00 Prep & Landing:** **Naughty v Nice 3.25** **The Big Bang Theory** **9.00 Film:** The Inbetweeners Movie (2011) **11.05 Gogglebox 1.10 Rude Tube Christmas Cracker** **2.25 Big Tube 3.20 Rude Tube Christmas Cracker** **4.10 Made in Chelsea Christmas Cracker** **5.00 Melissa & Joey** **Film4** **11.45 Film:** Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules (2011) **2.00 Father Christmas 2.35** **Prep & Landing 3.00 Prep & Landing:** **Naughty v Nice 3.25** **The Big Bang Theory** **9.00 Film:** The Inbetweeners Movie (2011) **11.05 Gogglebox 1.10 Rude Tube 2 Christmas Cracker** **2.25 Big Tube 3.20 Rude Tube Christmas Cracker** **4.10 Made in Chelsea Christmas Cracker** **5.00 Melissa & Joey** **11.00 Miracle on 34th Street (1994)** **1.15 Arthur Christmas (2011)** **3.15 Mr Popper's Penguins (2011)** **5.05 Thunderbirds (2004)** **6.50 Knight and Day (2010)** **9.00 Last Vegas (2013)** **11.10 The Transporter (2002)** **12.55 Rear Window (1954)** **3.15 Close**

## Star Reader Travel

## THE VIEW FROM THE SHARD

Quote Code: DTT926



Departing Saturday 11 March, 1 April, 20 May, 12 August &amp; 2 September 2017



## Price Includes...

- ✓ Overnight stay at a 4 star hotel within 20 miles of central London with dinner and full English breakfast
- ✓ Admission to The View from The Shard on Sunday morning
- ✓ Free time in London

## 2 days, by coach

only £149.95pp

View product online at [www.omegaholidays.com/DTT926](http://www.omegaholidays.com/DTT926)

Single room supplement £30pp. Subject to availability.

## THE TOWER of London

Saturday departures, 11 March &amp; 20 May 2017



Price Includes...

- ✓ Overnight stay at a 4 star hotel within 20 miles of central London with 3-course dinner and full English breakfast
- ✓ Admission to the Tower of London
- ✓ Free time in London

## 2 days, by coach

only £139.95pp

View product online at [www.omegaholidays.com/HVW529](http://www.omegaholidays.com/HVW529)

## LONDON EYE &amp; Thames River Cruise

Saturday departures, March - September 2017



## Price Includes...

- ✓ Overnight stay at a 4 star hotel within 20 miles of central London with 3-course dinner and full English breakfast
- ✓ A flight on the London Eye
- ✓ A cruise on the River Thames
- ✓ Free time in London

## 2 days, by coach

only £149.95pp

View product online at [www.omegaholidays.com/DGW197](http://www.omegaholidays.com/DGW197)

Single room supplements £30pp. Subject to availability.

## THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

Quote Code: ELU698



## Price Includes...

- ✓ Overnight stay at a 4 star hotel within 20 miles of central London with 3-course dinner and full English breakfast
- ✓ Admission to the Palace of Westminster on Saturday, with self-guided audio tour
- ✓ Free time on Sunday

## 2 days, by coach

only £139.95pp

View product online at [www.omegaholidays.com/ELU698](http://www.omegaholidays.com/ELU698)

Single room supplement £30pp. Subject to availability.

Quote Code: PFR256

## KENSINGTON PALACE and London

Selected Saturday departures, 18 February, 1 April and 24 June 2017



## Price Includes...

- ✓ Overnight stay at a 4 star hotel within 20 miles of central London with 3-course dinner and full English breakfast
- ✓ Admission to Kensington Palace on the second day
- ✓ Free time in central London

## 2 days, by coach

only £139.95pp

View product online at [www.omegaholidays.com/HJH515](http://www.omegaholidays.com/HJH515)

Single room supplements £30pp. Subject to availability.

For more information or to book, please call: 01902 902165

OPENING TIMES: MON-FRI 8.30-19.00

SAT 8.30-16.00 SUN 10.00-16.00

Organised by Omega Holidays plc, ABTA V4782.



OmegaHols

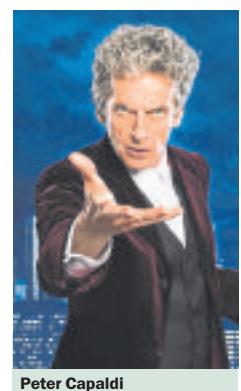


@OmegaHols



OmegaHols

## CHOICE



Peter Capaldi

## Doctor Who (BBC1, 5.45pm)

It's been a bleak year for Whovians. Instead of having a full series to enjoy, there's been nothing apart from spin-off series *Class*. It's been delightful, but it's just not the same as having some Tardis action to get your teeth into. But, as they say, absence makes the heart grow fonder, and as Steven Moffat (who bows out as the showrunner next year) has had an extra 12 months to work on this single episode, we're expecting big things. Not that the BBC is letting fans know too much about it – as with previous episodes, it's only giving away the bare essentials. So we'll see Peter Capaldi's Time Lord travel to New York, where he comes face to face with a mysterious superhero called The Ghost.

## BBC1

**6.00** Breakfast. **9.00** CBeebies The Nutcracker. **9.45** Legend of the Boneknapper Dragon. (R) **10.00** Christmas Day Service – Live from Bristol Cathedral. **11.00** Songs of Praise: Christmas Big Sing. (R) **11.30** News: Weather. **11.50** The Queen's Commonwealth. (2013) **1.20** Shaun the Sheep: The Farmer's Llamas. (R) **1.50** Top of the Pops Christmas. **2.50** BBC News: Weather. **3.00** The Queen's Christmas Broadcast. **3.10** Film: Frozen. (2013) **4.45** The Great Christmas Bake Off. **5.45** Doctor Who. **6.45** Strictly Come Dancing Christmas Special. Tess Daly and Claudia Winkleman host the festive special, with previous contestants Denise Lewis, Frankie Bridge, Pamela Stephenson, Ainsley Harriott, Gethin Jones and Melvin Odum. **8.00** Call the Midwife. Christmas special, in which the nurses of Nonnatus House travel to South Africa to help the struggling staff of a mission clinic faced with closure. Sinead Cusack guest stars. **9.30** EastEnders. Any hopes of a merry Christmas seem slim with Phil's health deteriorating rapidly. Lee struggling with the burden of his secrets and the return of none other than Max Branning. **10.30** Mr Brown's Boys Christmas Special. Grandad's health causes concern. Mrs Brown steps in when a fire at the salon leaves Rory and Dino with nowhere to work, while Dermot faces stiff competition to win a contract. **11.00** The Best of Tracey Ullman's Show. Highlights from the comedy sketch show, as well as some brand new material, including a look at what would happen if Clare Balding was left in charge of BBC's Christmas schedules. **11.30** BBC News: Weather. **11.45** On Christmas Night. Don Warrington reads the daily story of the shepherds' visit to the Christ Child. **11.50** Would I Lie to You? At Christmas. With Richard Osman, Tom Courtenay, Sara Pascoe and Chris Kamara. (R) **12.20** Have I Got a Bit More 2016 News for You. **1.05** Citizen Khan. (R) **1.35** Film: While You Were Sleeping. (1995) **3.10** Weather for the Week Ahead. **3.15** BBC News.

## BBC2

**6.40** Countryfile. (R) **7.35** Film: The Cat in the Hat. (2003) **8.50** Film: Tom Thumb. (1958) **10.20** Film: Tom's 2000. **11.40** Carols from King's. (R) **12.55** Will Self: From the Edge. (R) **1.15** The Coal Train. (R) **2.25** Film: The Artist. (2011) Oscar-winning silent drama, starring Jean Dujardin. **4.00** Dancing the Nutcracker – Inside the Royal Ballet. **5.30** Sign Zone: The Queen's Christmas Broadcast. (R) **5.40** The Morecambe and Wise Christmas Show – 1976. (R) **6.45** Christmas University Challenge. Alumni of Magdalene College, Cambridge, and St Hilda's, Oxford compete in the penultimate first-round match of the special run of Christmas episodes. Jeremy Paxman hosts. **7.15** Blackadder's Christmas Carol. Kindly Victorian pushover Ebenezer Blackadder is visited by the Spirit of Christmas and gains an insight into the dastardly deeds of his ancestors. Starring Rowan Atkinson. (R) **8.00** Dad's Army. Pompous Captain Mainwaring proves he is a softie at heart by organising a Christmas treat for the struggling senior citizens of Walmington-on-Sea. (R) **8.30** Gospel Christmas. Gregory Porter and Beverley Knight host a concert from St John at Hackney, London, featuring the London Community Gospel Choir, the House Gospel Choir performing from a live audience, with guest vocalists including Katy B, Shara Escoffery and vocal quintet Vade. **9.30** Victorian Bakers at Christmas. The bakers prepare Victorian Christmas recipes, including twelfth cakes, bread-based punch, roasts to feed entire communities, and mince pies made with either beef or tripe. **10.30** OI XL. Sandi Toksvig and Alan Davies are joined by Josh Widdicombe, Susan Calman and Matt Lucas for an extended festive special, with a series of tough questions on the subject of Noel. **11.15** Film: Great Expectations. (2012) An orphan is given the chance to rise through high society with the assistance of a mysterious benefactor. Period drama, with Jeremy Irvine and Helena Bonham Carter. **11.50** Film: A Hard Day's Night. (1964) **2.40** This is BBC Two.

## ITV

**6.00** CITV: Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Super 6. **6.55** Adventure. (R) **7.10** Dino Dan. (R) **7.15** Oddities. (R) **7.20** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **7.30** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **7.45** Horrid Henry. (R) **8.00** Horrid Henry. (R) **8.15** Horrid Henry. (R) **8.25** Weekend at Christmas. **9.25** Countrywise: Guide to Britain. (R) **9.55** Film: Despicable Me 2. (2013) **11.55** Film: Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets. (2002) **3.00** The Queen. **3.10** Film: The Lion King. (1994) Disney animated musical, with the voice of Matthew Broderick. **4.55** ITV News: Weather. **5.15** You've Been Framed! Harry's Naughty List. **5.45** Emmerdale. **6.45** Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs at Christmas. The comedian visits Battersea Dogs & Cats Home at Christmas, and tries to get a snaggle-toothed shih tzu the royal seal of approval when the Duchess of Cornwall drops by to open a new building. Paul also arranges an ultrasound for a heavily pregnant pug cross and raises a dog with painfully bowed legs. **7.45** ITV News: Weather. **8.00** Coronation Street. Leanne is thrilled when Toyah returns to the cobbles, while Peter and Nick wind up brawling in the street, and Bethany collapses in the ginnel from an overdose. **9.00** Maigret's Dead Man. Rowan Atkinson stars as the Parisian detective in the second in a run of adaptations of Georges Simenon's books. Maigret is disturbed from a string of attacks on three nearby farms by a series of anonymous phone calls from a man who claims a gang is trying to kill him. He and his trusty associates LaPointe and Janvier go in search of the caller, which leads them to the discovery of a body that has been dumped out of a car. Maigret is convinced the corpse is the man who phoned him – but his face has been mutilated, making it impossible to confirm his identity. **11.00** Film: Love Actually. (2003) Interlinked tales of several people in search of love. Richard Curtis's romantic comedy, with Hugh Grant, Martine McCutcheon, Emma Thompson and Colin Firth. **12.30** Film: King Kong. (2005) **4.25** ITV Nightscreen. **2.40** This is BBC Two.

## CHANNEL 4

**6.20** Prep & Landing: Naughty v Nice. (R) **6.40** The Bear. (R) **7.10** Painting the Bear Hunt. **7.15** Film: Animals United. (2010) **8.55** The Simpsons. (R) **9.20** The Simpsons. (R) **10.15** Film: The Simpsons. (R) **11.50** Film: The Polar Express. (2004) **12.20** Film: The Snowman. (R) **12.20** Film: The Wizard in the Stone. (1963) Disney animated adventure, with the voice of Dickie Sorenson. **2.05** The Alternative Christmas Message. **2.15** Channel 4 News. **2.20** Film: It's a Wonderful Life. (1946) Fantasy drama, starring James Stewart. **4.55** The Snowman and the Snowdog. (R) **5.25** We're Going on a Bear Hunt. (R) **6.00** Film: Home Alone. (1990) A boy has to fend for himself when he is accidentally left behind after his family jets off to Paris for Christmas. The youngster initially enjoys his freedom, but is soon forced to resort to ingenious booby traps to defend the family home from two dim-witted burglars. Comedy, starring Macaulay Culkin, Joe Pesci, Daniel Stern, John Heard, Catherine O'Hara and John Candy. **8.00** Travel Man: 48 Hours in Florence. Rebel Wilson joins Richard Ayoade on a rapid-fire tour of the Italian city, taking in as much as they can in just two days. They race past iconic works of art including Botticelli's *Venus and Mars* and Michelangelo's *Davids*, take in some street art, go on a rafting trip down the River Arno, climb to the top of the city's cathedral and dine on a traditional tripe sandwich. **9.00** Gogglebox 2016. A look back at some of the highlights of this year's series, featuring regular armchair presenters Leon and June, Christopher and Stephen, and the Michaels family offering their thoughts on popular and topical TV shows. **10.30** Alan Carr's Christmas Chatty Man. The host is joined for this Christmas special by guests including Tom Daley, Gary Barlow, Dannii Minogue and Martin Kemp, with music from Emeli Sandé and Robbie Williams. **12.35** Film: Four Christmases. (2008) **2.05** Rude Tube Christmas Cracker. **2016. (R) 3.05** Very British Problems at Christmas. (R) **4.00** Location, Location, Location. (R) **5.00** Supershoppers. (R) **5.25** The Restoration Man. (R) **5.40** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **5.55** The Restoration Man. (R)

## CHANNEL 5

**6.10** Milkshake!: Milkshake! Festive Fun. (R) **6.40** Shimmer and Shine. **6.40** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.00** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **7.20** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **7.35** Film: The Adventures of Tintin. (2011) **8.00** Film: The Snowman. (R) **8.15** Film: The Polar Express. (2004) **9.15** Film: The Wizard of Oz. (1939) Musical fantasy, starring Judy Garland. **4.10** Film: Singin' in the Rain. (1952) Musical comedy, starring Gene Kelly. **6.15** Britain's Favourite Xmas Songs. A countdown of popular songs that are guaranteed to make any Christmas party go with a swing. Highlights include the Jackson 5's Santa Claus Is Coming to Town, Greg Lake's I Believe in Father Christmas, the Waitresses' Christmas Wrapping and the Pogues' *Kirsty MacColl's Fairy Tale of New York*. (R) **7.00** This Christmas just got its sell-by date? Will Jona Lewie ever Stop the Cavalry? And where would any Christmas party be without Slade and their classic anthem  *Merry Xmas Everybody*? But which one will top the nation's festive chart? Featuring contributions by artists, producers, video directors, composers and journalists, who shed light on the creation of the songs and their accompanying videos. (R) **8.30** When Celebrities Go Pop. A countdown of the 40 most memorable musical efforts by celebrities who have decided to diversify into music. The programme features by Mr T, Katie Price, Victoria Beckham, Salt Fox, Eddie "The Eagle" Edwards, David Hasselhoff, an assortment of sports stars and Christopher Lee, who embarked on a second career as a heavy-metal singer in his 80s. **10.30** Film: Dallas Buyers Club. (2013) Premiere. A man diagnosed with HIV sets up an organisation to smuggle drugs for treating the condition into the US. Fact-based drama, starring Matthew McConaughey and Jared Leto. **12.45** Greatest Ever Christmas Songs. (R) **1.10** SuperCasino. Live interactive gaming. **3.10** Chris Tarrant: On the Xmas Express. (R) **4.00** Now That's Funny! (R) **4.50** House Doctor. (R) **5.40** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **5.55** The Restoration Man. (R)

## DIGITAL

**BBC Four** **7.00** King Lear. **10.10** The Good Old Days: Christmas 1976. **11.00** Top of the Pops Christmas Hits. **12.00** Old Grey Whistle Test: 70's Gold. **1.30** All Aboard! The Sleigh Ride. **3.30** Close **ITV2** **11.00** You've Been Framed! With Bells on. **11.35** Emmerdale. **12.00** Coronation Street. **1.05** Film: The Polar Express. (2004) **3.10** You've Been Framed! **4.15** Catchphrase Christmas Special. **5.15** Minion Madness. **5.30** Film: One Hundred and One Dalmatians. (1961) **7.15** Film: Mr Bean's Holiday. (2007) **9.00** Film: Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason. (2004) **11.15** Family Guy. **1.10** American Dad. **2.00** The Cleveland Show. **2.30** Film: Not Another Teen Movie. (2001) **4.10** The Almost Impossible Gameshow. **5.00** Planet's Funniest Animals. **5.45** ITV2 Nightscreen **ITV3** **11.30** Film: Carry on Cleo. (1964) **1.25** Film: Carry On Onwards. (1973) **3.15** Film: Carry On Getting It On. (1980) **5.05** Film: Carry On Up the Junction. (1973) **7.00** Film: Carry On Cowboy. (1966) **9.00** Film: Stepford and Son Ride Again. (1973) **11.00** Film: The Sting. (1973) **1.40** Film: The Four Musketeers. (1974) **3.35** Wycliffe. **5.00** Doctor at Large. **5.25** Movies Now. **5.35** ITV3 Nightscreen **ITV4** **11.20** Film: The Green Berets. (1968) **2.20** Film: Dunkirk. (1959) **5.05** Film: Where Eagles Dare. (1968) **8.10** Film: jaws. The Revenge. (1978) **10.00** Film: Body of Lies. (2008) **12.35** Film: The Snowman and the Snowdog. **8.00** The Big Bang Theory. **9.00** Film: The Inbetweeners 2. (2014) **11.00** The Inbetweeners 2. (2014) **1.20** Tattoo Fixers at Christmas. **2.25** Virtually Famous. **3.10** Film: The Inbetweeners 3. **5.00** Hollyoaks **E4** **11.25** Rude(ish) Tube Shorts. **11.30** Baby Daddy. **12.30** How I Met Your Mother. **2.30** The Goldbergs. **3.00** The Big Bang Theory. **4.00** Film: Festive Guests. **6.00** Frozen at Christmas. **7.00** The Snowman. **7.35** The Snowman and the Snowdog. **8.00** The Big Bang Theory. **9.00** Film: The Inbetweeners 2. (2014) **11.00** The Inbetweeners 2. (2014) **1.20** Tattoo Fixers at Christmas. **2.25** Virtually Famous. **3.10** Film: The Inbetweeners 3. **5.00** Hollyoaks **Film4** **11.00** Rio. (2010) **12.50** Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs. (2009) **2.35** Cheaper By the Dozen. (2003) **4.25** The Princess Diaries. (2001) **6.35** The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel. (2011) **9.00** Thor. (2011) **11.15** Your Highness. (2011) **1.20** Vertigo. (1958) **4.00** Close

**Trevor E. W. Hickton Ltd**  
**Whitmore House, 8-11 Lower High Street,**  
**Cradley Heath, B64 5AB Tel: 01384 569569**

**Independent Family**  
**Funeral**  
**Directors**

**Golden Charter**  
**Funeral Plans**

**R. Hadley & Hickton**  
**36-38 Windmill Hill Halesowen.**  
**B63 2BZ. 01384 636606**

## BOXING DAY

## Captain Phillips, ITV, 9pm

An American cargo ship sets a dangerous course around the coast of Somalia, while inland, four men are pressed into service as pirates by the local warlords. The captain is taken hostage when the raiding party hijacks the vessel, resulting in a tense five-day crisis. Fact-based thriller, starring Tom Hanks and Barkhad Abdi. (2013)

## TUESDAY

## Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire, ITV, 7.30pm

The teenage wizard is chosen to represent Hogwarts School in a dangerous magical tournament. Fourth instalment of the fantasy saga, starring Daniel Radcliffe and Robert Pattinson. (2005)



Captain Phillips, Boxing Day, ITV, 9pm

## WEDNESDAY

## Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix, ITV, 7.30pm

The young wizard struggles to convince his fellow sorcerers that the evil Lord Voldemort has returned to life. When Hogwarts headmaster Dumbledore is ousted in favour of a sadistic replacement, Harry realises he must take matters into his own hands, uniting his fellow pupils to form a secret army and training them for the inevitable confrontation to come. Adventure sequel, starring Daniel Radcliffe. (2007)

## THURSDAY

## Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull, BBC1, 11.20pm

The globe-trotting archaeologist races against Soviet agents to find a mysterious artefact of untold power. Action adventure sequel, starring Harrison Ford and Cate Blanchett. (2008)

## FRIDAY

## Captain America: The Winter Soldier, BBC1, 8.30pm

The superhero soldier becomes an operative for secret intelligence agency SHIELD, but grows suspicious of their motives. Following a battle with a mysterious cyborg assassin, he and fellow Avenger Black Widow become fugitives, and try to bring down a sinister conspiracy. Comic-book thriller sequel, starring Chris Evans. (2014)

# Money matters in this mystery tale of murder

ITV may have brought us the definitive version of Hercule Poirot, but the BBC feels like the small screen home of Agatha Christie.

It has adapted the Miss Marple cases, and broadcast adventures based on the Tommy and Tuppence characters last year, as well as a blockbuster version of *And Then There Were None*.

The latter was shown during the festive season, and this year, there's another all-star Christie feast for fans in this take of her classic short story, *The Witness for the Prosecution*.

"And Then There Were None" made a huge impact last year, garnering great reviews and audiences of over eight million," remarks executive producer Karen Thrussell. "We're thrilled to be reunited with Sarah Phelps as she takes on another iconic title, an incendiary courtroom drama that will keep you guessing right to the very end. The source material is so strong, and we hope the end result will be every bit as striking as *And Then There Were None*."

The Witness for the Prosecution is

no stranger to screen treatment, of course. The BBC made the first version way back in 1949; a US version made it to TV in 1953, the same year it was first produced as a stage play.

Perhaps the most famous adaptation came in 1957 when it was turned into a movie by none other than the legendary Billy Wilder, who cast Charles Laughton, Marlene Dietrich and Tyrone Power (in his final completed part) in the lead roles.

Then, in 1982, another TV drama followed, this time featuring an all-star cast that included Ralph Richardson, Deborah Kerr, Donald Pleasance and Wendy Hiller. It was recently announced that Ben Affleck will direct and star in a future take on the tale.

Filming for the latest production based on the story took place in Liverpool this summer and sees Toby Jones, Andrea Riseborough, Kim Cattrall and David Haig taking lead roles.

"With the long terrible shadow of the Great War falling across the racketeering, feral 1920s, *The Witness for the Prosecution* is a compelling story of

deceit, desire, murder, money and morality, innocence and guilt, heartbreak and – most painful and dangerous of all – love," says Phelps. "At the centre of this dark and tangled net is the astonishing character of Romaine, the noir heroine for all times."

Romaine is an enigmatic chorus girl and the partner of Leonard Vole, a young chancer who has been accused of the brutal murder of the enormously wealthy Emily French. She's been found in her handsome 1920s London residence and, having left her fortune to Vole, he certainly had a motive to kill her.

Vole is convinced that Romaine can prove his innocence, but he is in for a terrible surprise...

"Combining Sarah's brilliance with the excellent and skilful eye of our director, Julian Jarrold, we expect to deliver a show that will thrill both audiences who have enjoyed Christie's work before and those who are coming to it for the first time," claims Hilary Strong, CEO of Agatha Christie Ltd.

Let's hope her verdict is the right one!



The Witness for the Prosecution, Boxing Day, BBC1, 9pm

## BEST OF THE REST

## BOXING DAY

## Still Open All Hours

## BBC1, 8.30pm

Granville and Gastric find themselves playing marriage counsellors, while Leroy adopts a festive disguise to avoid relationship trouble of a different kind. Meanwhile, Mrs Featherstone struggles to get into the Christmas spirit and Kath attempts to bring the street together as one harmonious choir of carolers to beat Finkle Street once and for all – but does Granville have a trick up his sleeve to help them out? David Jason, Tim Healy, James Baxter and Stephanie Cole star.

## TUESDAY

## There's a Croc in My Kitchen

## Channel 5, 8pm

Documentary following people around Britain who keep predatory wild animals as unusual pets. Chris Weller from Kent owns a crocodile, and spent £20,000 converting his house to accommodate the dangerous reptile, while in Gloucester, Patricia and her sons live with a serval, a big cat that is one of Africa's deadliest hunters. Jim and Chris own a 20-stone Komodo dragon, while Terry fears his pet lynx Pudding may have been poisoned. Devon resident Andre owns a wolf hybrid that shares her bed – but fears he may be on his last legs.

## WEDNESDAY

## Jonathan Creek

## BBC1, 9pm

It's not quite a Christmas ghost story, but there's definitely a spooky element to Jonathan's latest case, which centers on Daemons' Roost, the home of a 19th-century sorcerer who claimed to be able to summon the powers of Hell. The property now belongs to horror film director Nathan Clore (played by Ken Bones, which is arguably an even better name for a gore maestro) who summons his stepdaughter Alison (Georgie Lord) home so he can explain exactly what happened to her family there when she was a child. Unfortunately, Clore suffers a debilitating stroke before he can come clean, leaving Alison to try to piece together the mystery together herself. Jonathan may be just the man to help her, but his wife Polly (Sarah Alexander) believes he's already got enough on his plate. Meanwhile, the Reverend Wendell Wilkie (Warwick Davis) also finds himself drawn into the mystery.

## THURSDAY

## Life in the Snow

## BBC1, 8pm

Gordon Buchanan goes in search of

animals that live in snowy conditions and have adapted to survive in cold weather. The programme features polar bears raising their cubs, owls keeping their supplies of food hidden under a layer of snow, penguins that huddle together for warmth, and wolverines and ravens working alongside each other to find food. He also takes a look at the lives of animals associated with Christmas, including robins and reindeer, revealing the truth behind the story of Rudolph's red nose.



Jonathan Creek, Wednesday, BBC1, 9pm

chance to offload their junk by exchanging it for someone else's. So, prepare to feel nostalgic as Noel hosts this familiar-sounding programme, in which guests get a chance to bid on an eclectic mix of items. The owners will also be there to explain why they are getting rid off their stuff – it might be an unwanted present, something bought in haste, or the cause of a series of family rows. Or perhaps they just thought it would be more fun to be on the TV then to sell it online. Either way, Noel and his So team are here to help.

Judi Dench: All the World's Her Stage  
BBC2, 8pm

She's one of Britain's greatest actors and has also been dubbed 'the second most popular woman in Britain' (presumably the Queen pipped her to the top spot). Now this documentary, narrated by Colin Salmon, looks back over her remarkable 60-year career, and finds out just why she has become such an institution. The actors sharing their memories of working with her include Daniel Craig, Sir Ian McKellen and Billy Connolly, who reminisces about the time he thought Judi was failing for him on the set of *Mrs Brown*. Former Miss Moneypenny Samantha Bond reveals that she had to calm Pierce Brosnan's nerves before his first scene with the legendary actress.



### Repairs, Spares, Sales

All major brands repaired, also built in appliances, electric cookers, tumble dryers etc.

### Brand new, reconditioned appliances available

Brand New Washing Machine,  
5 year parts and labour guarantee  
Only £279 delivered and installed

Showroom open 9 am-5 pm Mon-Sat  
60 High Street,  
Blackheath, B65 0EH  
0121 561 3785

• WHIRLPOOL • ZANUSSI • HOOVER • DYSON

### CYPRESS NURSERY

#### CHRISTMAS TREES AVAILABLE NOW:

Lovely non-shedding Nordmann fir - all sizes on blocks and 3-4 ft rooted

SPECIAL OFFER ON 12FT NORDMANN FIR CHRISTMAS TREES - WHILE STOCKS LAST

Traditional Norway Spruce up to 15 ft on blocks or rooted

Blue Spruce 3-4 & 6-7 ft root balled | Can be delivered for a small fee if required

#### WE ARE JUST STARTING TO MAKE ON SITE:

\* Holly Balls \* Wreaths \* Door Rings \* Oasis Pans

Call in now and order yours, or phone/email, any design and colour co-ordinated, if required

Yew Tree Lane (off Powke Lane) Blackheath Phone: 0121 559 1495

OPENING TIMES 7 DAYS A WEEK 9 - 5.15

Due to being open 7 days - Closed 1 - 2 for lunch

CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED | [www.cypressnursery.net](http://www.cypressnursery.net) | [info@cypressnursery.net](mailto:info@cypressnursery.net)





Hot dog with a difference – Mac and Cheese Dog



Burger Priest in busy spot in Wolverhampton city centre



Are you sitting comfortably – variety of seating choices



High Priest Burger – one of the many choices

## Praise be! It's a Priestly burger

**IN the beginning, there was the burger, and the burger was... well, not very good.**

It's fair to say that it has taken the UK some time to master the hamburger. Once the only options you were McDonalds, Wimpy, and the kind of hot food vans you get at Wolves matches.

Not exactly an embarrassment of riches. Eventually Burger King came along and upped the burger game somewhat.

Then The Gourmet Burger Kitchen arrived and changed all that, reasoning that if you were going to be a burger chain, then people might be willing to pay a bit more money and come back for more if the burgers were, you know, actually half-decent.

And so burgers got posh. Rather than the embarrassingly perfunctory slabs of meat and processed cheese on offer at high street fast food establishments, you now get things like dry-aged steak, smoked Applewood cheese, onion jam, truffle mayonnaise and avocado.

The success of Gourmet Burger Kitchen proved that there was a market for Fancy

Pete Cashmore tucks in

Dan poshburgers, and indeed the subsequent rise of Five Guys, of which there are two in Birmingham, proved that you could apply the posh burger ethos to a fast food environment and make it work.

Any city worth its salt has at least one posh burger joint in its midst, and it was with this in mind that, a few months back, Wolverhampton welcomed Burger Priest. How could it possibly fail? It's in a prime location opposite House Of Fraser, with a whole load of footfall due to the fact that the Man On The Oss is around the corner.

Which is why it's puzzling that when myself and my dinner date arrived at 8pm on Saturday, the place was all but deserted, with more serving staff than customers.

It may well be that we were in some kind of post-dinner, pre-chucking out time lull, or that word of mouth hasn't started working for Burger Priest yet. What this at least meant was that we got to take up one of the sofas in the funky interior – there are sofas, regular tables and high-stool diner-style

counters to choose from. As we entered, Rosanna by Toto was playing on the music system which I took as a good sign. Largely, I was proved correct.

It's a fascinating proposition, is Burger Priest, with a menu full of the weird and the eccentric and the occasionally downright loopy. If you wanted, for example, you could feast on something called the Surf'n'Turf Burger, six ounces of meat patties on a bun, with lobster tail meat and seafood sauce.

### Trimmings

Another option might be the Mac and Cheese Dog, which as the name suggests is a Frankfurter sausage on a bun, topped with crispy bacon and macaroni and cheese. I think it's fair to say that one has enough stodge for anyone.

My comrade and I decided to play it safe and go for the Altar Burger, one each, which is simply a double-patty burger with bacon, smoked Applewood cheese and all the salad trimmings. You have the option of piling on some extras at no extra cost if you feel the need, which I obviously did, and

so I decided to throw in a layer of sautéed mushrooms too – sautéed onions, bell peppers and beef tomato are among some of the other choices.

Now, initially I had intended to just get a burger and fries, but at the last minute I had a rush of blood to the head and decided that my side should be salted beef poutine, consisting of French fries in meat gravy with cheese curd.

Well it seems like Burger Priest subscribe to the American model of meat patty – basically, shape a big lump of beef until it is roughly round and then slap it on the grill with the minimum of frills and let it go. The smoked cheese is, I would argue, the perfect cheese to accompany a burger, and the bacon was thick and rustic.

Burger Priest definitely isn't for everyone – it's loud, it's funky, it's a bit brash and you have to be prepared to literally get your hands dirty. My suggestion to them would be to provide their customers with multiple wet wipes and then they'd be nudging true greatness. Even so, they claim to treat their meaty products with a touch of the divine, and in me, they have a new convert.

# Is your business invisible?

Get seen in search



As a Bing and Google certified partner, our team of experts can help get your business seen in online search.

To find out more go to [www.mnadigital.co.uk/search](http://www.mnadigital.co.uk/search) or call 01902 504512

**MNA DIGITAL**

51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton WV1 1ES | 01902 504512 | [www.mnadigital.co.uk](http://www.mnadigital.co.uk)



# Local Specialists



## Builders

### D H Household Maintenance

All building maintenance and DIY work undertaken  
All areas covered  
0121 422 8594  
07985 548466

### Carpet & Upholstery Cleaning

### CLEANCARE

#### Carpet & Upholstery

##### Cleaners

Fully Trained  
Insured  
Est: over 12 years  
Friendly service  
For free quotes  
Call  
(07816) 817744  
Tel: 0121 503 0854

### Carpet Cleaning

### Clean Carpets Dudley

Carpets & Upholstery  
Fresh, Hygienic &  
Dry in 1 Hour

20% OFF TILL END OF JAN

Call Steven on  
01384 848496 or 07468 031133  
www.clean-carpets-dudley.co.uk

### Driveways & Patios

### Cressage Paving

Specialists in:  
Block Paving, Tarmac, Landscaping, Gravelling, Patios, Forecourts, Fencing and Driveways All Groundwork undertaken

### FREE WRITTEN QUOTATION

Mini Digger &  
Driver available  
01384 944032  
Mob: 07879 073702  
www.cressage-group.co.uk

### Driveways

### DISCOUNT DRIVEWAYS

Block Paving and Tarmac  
Drives • Paths • Patios  
Slabbing • Red Tarmac  
Car Parks

5 Year Guarantee  
On All Work

Free Quotations and Advice

Tel: 01384 79900 • 07583 170190  
www.discountdriveways.co.uk

### Local Specialists

Our Specialist Section offers you a wide range of local businesses and tradesmen to deal with your needs and requirements.

## Carpentry

### CARPENTRY SERVICES

#### ROBERT CHESNEY

##### CARPENTRY / JOINERY

KITCHEN FITTING SPECIALIST  
ALL CARPENTRY WORKS  
ROOFS / DOORS / LOCKS  
DECKING SPECIALIST

CALL NOW FOR A FREE QUOTE  
0121 421 6740  
07779746939

## Computers

### NEED ADVICE ON COMPUTING?

- All PC Problems Resolved • Software & Hardware Installed
- Virus & Spyware Removed • PC Health Checks
- Home Network Implemented • Internet Connections Installed

DON'T BE FOOLED INTO THINKING YOU NEED A NEW PC  
Call: 0121 422 7646 or: 07970 846 552  
JUDR@P PC SUPPORT  
email: support@judrap.com www.judrap.com

## Decorating



### HARRISONS

#### PAINTING & DECORATING

##### Commercial & Residential Work Undertaken

- Painting
- Tiling
- Kitchens
- Paperhanging
- Flooring
- Bathrooms

Call Nick: 07792865975  
nkharrison@btinternet.com

Fully Insured - Quality Finishing - Reasonable Rates

### MJD Painter & Decorator

#### Interior & Exterior

Special discounts for OAP's  
Free Quotes - Fully Insured  
Commercial Work Undertaken

No job too small  
Give Mick a Call  
Tel: 07889923896

Michael.J.Downing@hotmail.co.uk

## Double Glazing

### Misted Sealed Units?

### Black Country Glazing

### Contact US for a FREE quote!

Manufacturers & Installers of windows, doors & conservatories

### 'A' Rated Windows as Standard

### 10 YEAR GUARANTEE

Please see our customer reviews on either Homepro or Which

Energy efficient windows that won't cost the earth

Station Street, Cradley Heath, B64 6AJ

Est 1987 01384 566100 www.blackcountryglazing.com



## Electricians

### J S QUALITY ELECTRICAL SERVICES LTD

Fuseboard upgrades / complete rewires / security alarms and lighting / fault finding and repairs / shower replacements and more

Free quotations available  
Over 20 years' experience

Contact now:

0121 531 6884 / 07753 393562

www.jsqualityelectrical.co.uk

j.selectricalservices@hotmail.co.uk

Winter Deals now on - call for more information

### ELECTRICIAN

Fully guaranteed work  
Honest reliable service



Ring Tony or Julie on

07974 428 603

### KEEP IT LOCAL

'No Job Too Small'



All domestic and commercial electrical works undertaken

Home rewiring from £800

For a high quality

residential and

commercial work undertaken

CALL 07860 206713

0121 602 0966

halesowendecorators@gmail.com

FULLY INSURED

10% OFF with this advert

Residential and

Commercial work undertaken

CALL 07860 206713

0121 602 0966

mbelectric.co.uk

FULLY INSURED

10% OFF with this advert

Residential and

Commercial work undertaken

CALL 07860 206713

0121 602 0966

mbelectric.co.uk

FULLY INSURED

10% OFF with this advert

Residential and

Commercial work undertaken

CALL 07860 206713

0121 602 0966

mbelectric.co.uk

FULLY INSURED

10% OFF with this advert

Residential and

Commercial work undertaken

CALL 07860 206713

0121 602 0966

mbelectric.co.uk

FULLY INSURED

10% OFF with this advert

Residential and

Commercial work undertaken

CALL 07860 206713

0121 602 0966

mbelectric.co.uk

FULLY INSURED

10% OFF with this advert

Residential and

Commercial work undertaken

CALL 07860 206713

0121 602 0966

mbelectric.co.uk

FULLY INSURED

10% OFF with this advert

Residential and

Commercial work undertaken

CALL 07860 206713

0121 602 0966

mbelectric.co.uk

FULLY INSURED

10% OFF with this advert

Residential and

Commercial work undertaken

CALL 07860 206713

0121 602 0966

mbelectric.co.uk

FULLY INSURED

10% OFF with this advert

Residential and

Commercial work undertaken

CALL 07860 206713

0121 602 0966

mbelectric.co.uk

FULLY INSURED

10% OFF with this advert

Residential and

Commercial work undertaken

CALL 07860 206713

0121 602 0966

mbelectric.co.uk

FULLY INSURED

10% OFF with this advert

Residential and

Commercial work undertaken

CALL 07860 206713

0121 602 0966

mbelectric.co.uk

FULLY INSURED

10% OFF with this advert

Residential and

Commercial work undertaken

CALL 07860 206713

0121 602 0966

mbelectric.co.uk

FULLY INSURED

10% OFF with this advert

Residential and

Commercial work undertaken

CALL 07860 206713

0121 602 0966

mbelectric.co.uk

FULLY INSURED

10% OFF with this advert

Residential and

Commercial work undertaken

CALL 07860 206713

0121 602 0966

mbelectric.co.uk

FULLY INSURED

10% OFF with this advert

Residential and

Commercial work undertaken

CALL 07860 206713

0121 602 0966

mbelectric.co.uk

FULLY INSURED

10% OFF with this advert

Residential and

Commercial work undertaken

CALL 07860 206713

0121 602 0966

mbelectric.co.uk

FULLY INSURED

10% OFF with this advert

Residential and

Commercial work undertaken

CALL 07860 206713

0121 602 0966

mbelectric.co.uk

FULLY INSURED

10% OFF with this advert

Residential and

Commercial work undertaken

CALL 07860 206713

0121 602 0966

mbelectric.co.uk

FULLY INSURED

10% OFF with this advert

Residential and

Commercial work undertaken

CALL 07860 206713

0121 602 0966

mbelectric.co.uk

FULLY INSURED

10% OFF with this advert

Residential and

Commercial work undertaken

CALL 07860 206713

0121 602 0966

mbelectric.co.uk

FULLY INSURED

10% OFF with this advert

Residential and

Commercial work undertaken

CALL 07860 206713

0121 602 0966

mbelectric.co.uk

FULLY INSURED

## Here's how to use your dating service ...

To Place your advert call: To Place your ad by text

**0844 381 5936**follow the simple instructions. You will also get **£10 SMS CHAT CREDIT****YOU** can now **Date ONLINE** or via your mobile just visit:<http://dating.expressandstar.com>**THE** biggest UK on-line database of 17 million UK **REAL** users waiting to meet **you.. visit..**<http://dating.expressandstar.com>

## Single Women

REMEMBER: Cells cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message.

JEAN, mature lady, genuine with many hobbies, slim, blonde and attractive. WLTM interesting gent with GSoh, must be cheerful, looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424675

HI! Gents, I'm Kelly, a down to earth lady, 35yrs, shapely blonde, seeking someone with GSoh, looks unimportant, any age. ACA, I promise! Tel: 0906 515 3024 Box 423035

CHRISTINE, 40, attractive slim sporty blonde seeks fit well built male. Call me to see what the future brings. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425061

NAUGHTY curly 46y old lady, outgoing and bubbly with a saucy side and lots of banter. WLTM chap 30+. You are married even better. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3012 Box 424543

LOUISE, 29, curly red haired female, been hurt in the past seeks male to buy her flowers and mend her broken heart. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425051

SARAH, 39yrs, married, seeking chap for no strings intimate times. Special friendship, mutual respect. Give me a call. Tel: 0906 515 3028 Box 408291

LYN, 47, curly quiet sensitive blonde but with a wild side. It could be exciting to know me! Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425013

TAMKIA, mature black beauty, hourglass figure and open minded. Pls call if you are discreet, broad minded and nice. I can travel and accommodate. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3004 Box 422365

RETIRED happy, caring, attractive female, likes gardening, travel, animals, comedy, sees talk, funny, kind chap. Shropshire. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411459

AMANDA, 36, tall, slim, busy blonde seeks man, any age, any area, for discreet daytime fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418117

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated blonde seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+. Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3000 Box 419673

SANDRA, smart, sophisticated lady young looking 60s, genuine and kind seeks gent with GSoh, looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424671

JANE, young, 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. Tel: No: 0906 515 3008 Box: 409715

CAROL, mid 50s lady, young at heart, attractive and sexy (so I'm told)! Give me a call if you are a gent with GSoh. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424783

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. Tel: 0906 515 3016 Box: 413399

SUE, 60, lady, calling all gent who seek a mature solvent stylish lady, I can wine and dine you, you will have a nice time, call or text me. Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424781

EMILY, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3020 Box 421375

**RAPID MATCH**  
Simply tell us your age and location and we will match you immediately!  
TEXT **LOVE** to **89990**  
or call **0906 500 5575****It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!**  
**Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month**  
**VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>**

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!

Unlimited use for just £19.95 per month

VISIT: <http://dating.expressandstar.com>

It's cheaper now to refresh your love life online!&lt;/

# Classified Ads

Buy Local, Sell Local

## Index

- 1 Family
- 2 Leisure Time
- 3 Home & Services
- 4 Pets & Animals
- 5 Business & Farming
- 6 Property
- 7 Jobs
- 8 Motoring
- 9 Local Information
- 10 Personals

## FreeAds

IT'S  
FREE  
IT'S  
EASY

For items up to £250

VISIT:

[bookanad.expressandstar.co.uk](http://bookanad.expressandstar.co.uk)

Simply press the free ad icon.  
Sorry, no pets, guns or livestock.  
Private advertisers only.

## Place a paid for advert

By Phone 01902 317878  
8.30am - 5.30pm Mon - Fri.  
Closed Sat/Sun and Bank Holidays

Online  
[bookanad.expressandstar.co.uk](http://bookanad.expressandstar.co.uk)

In person  
At your local Express & Star Office.  
Cancel/amend, call before 3.00pm  
Monday - Friday for the next day's  
advertisement or also before 3.00pm  
Friday for Monday's advertisement.

### funeral directors

N.E.DOWNING  
(Blackheath) Ltd

Independent  
family run  
Funeral Directors

24 hour service  
Halesowen  
0121 422 2794

[www.nedowning.co.uk](http://www.nedowning.co.uk)

### lost & found



MISSING JACK RUSSELL  
CALLED YOGI

Black body, tan legs and white  
chest, wire haired, lost in  
Fryer Park, since December  
8, limp on back leg, 9 years  
old, suffers from fits, needs  
medication.  
heartbroken Family needs  
him home.  
07432 144520.

1  
Family

### elderly & disabled

ELECTRIC RISE & recline chair,  
beige floral, £60 ono.  
07950 481254.

MOTORCYCLES from £350  
can deliver, servicing available.  
Call: 01902 885429  
255019, 07631 246292.

WREKIN STAIRLIFTS reconditioned  
lifts from £799. New available.  
01952 405397/07897 273617

2  
Leisure  
Time

### caravans / motorhomes

We Want Your  
Motorhome

Finance Cleared  
Fast Secure Payment  
Top Prices Paid  
Please Call  
AEG on 01384 848439 or  
Lee Jinks on 07740 895448

[www.aegmotorhomes.co.uk](http://www.aegmotorhomes.co.uk)

### LOOK

BK BLUEBIRD STATIC  
CARAVAN

35 x 12, on 11 month holiday  
park within walking distance  
of Stourport-on-Severn.  
On site Club House.  
Phone for full details.  
£850.

07810 044813  
or  
07801 530894.

### fishing

PRESTON X65 on box, with back  
rest and foot platform, 3 additional  
drawer units, excellent condition.  
£150. 07766 014246.

### music shop

TECHNICS PIANO excellent condition,  
rarely used, full working order  
with various sounds / rhythms.  
£250. 01384 27157.

### sports & leisure

FreeAds  
IT'S FREE, IT'S EASY  
For items upto £250.  
Online at  
[bookanad.expressandstar.co.uk](http://bookanad.expressandstar.co.uk)

### mind, body & soul

### clairvoyance

CLAIRVOYANT JOHN STARKEY  
Appointments, Home visits & Telephone readings 01902 334 224

3  
Home &  
Services

### furniture

BFC FURNITURE  
OUR BIGGEST EVER SALE  
Plus Interest Free Credit 0% apr  
STARTS BOXING DAY

SCARPIA LARGE CORNER SOFA  
BY LAURENCE LLEWELYN BOWEN  
NSP £1199

**SALE £749**

TUBCHAIRS IN BLACK,  
BROWN, RED

NSP £199  
**SALE £99**

EVE MATTRESSES (AS SEEN ON TV)

SINGLE WAS £249  
**SALE £149**  
DOUBLE WAS £249  
**SALE £249**  
KING WAS £299  
**SALE £279**

HUNDREDS OF BED FRAMES,  
DIVANS AND MATTRESSES  
TO TAKE AWAY.

Single matts from £39  
Double matts from £59  
King matts from £79

OTTOMAN FAUX LEATHER LIFT UP STORAGE  
BEDFRAME IN EXPRESSION BROWN.  
SINGLE NSP £399  
**SALE £199**  
DOUBLE NSP £499  
**SALE £249**  
KING NSP £599  
**SALE £299**

Open Everyday 10am-6pm  
**OPEN SUNDAY 10AM - 4PM**

BFC FACTORY OUTLET  
1000+ ITEMS  
GREAT BARGAINS  
OFF A461 & MINS FROM NEW  
TESCO & TOBY CARVERY

0121 557 6885

BIG CHOICE OF DINING FURNITURE

SETTEE, medium beige, as new, from  
Next, RRP £1,000, sell for  
£275 on o.n.o. 01902 723430.

TWO SEATER leather electric  
recliner settee, off white, excellent  
condition, cost £2,100, sell £400  
ono. 07828 325258.

TWO, TWO SEATER brown leather  
settee's. Very good condition.  
£150. Must collect. Merry Hill/  
Wolverhampton. 07746 143950.

2 PIECE SUITE, 3 seater and 2  
seater fabric brown/cream suite.  
Great condition. Real bargain. £400  
ono. 07428 990243.

### items for sale

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publisher of any cancellation or inaccuracy on the first day of publication.

## BOOK YOUR ADVERTISEMENTS OR FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS ONLINE AT

bookanad.  
[expressandstar.co.uk](http://expressandstar.co.uk)

and become one  
of hundreds of  
customers  
who regularly  
receive  
exclusive  
special offers  
& discounts.



## ClassifiedAds

### items wanted

ALL GOLD 9CT £300 PER OUNCE  
CASH PAID TODAY

We answer to too small a  
GENUINE LAJU BUYER

All Beswick • Doulton • Worcester Porcelain

• Lladro • Old coins

• WATCHES • COSTUME JEWELLERY

• ALL SILVER • ALL OTHER METALS

Pre '47 silver coins All war medals etc

ANYTHING OLD & INTERESTING

01922 495066 or 07971 728206

A BEST CASH PRICE

FOR ALL RAILWAY  
COLLECTIONS

Any gauge or age

Hornby • Bachmann • Bowmans

/ Roundhouse • Graham Farish

/ any live steam, Also Die Cast,

Corgi, Dinky, Spot On.

01384 636219/07891 714357.

[thetrainmaster67@hotmail.com](mailto:thetrainmaster67@hotmail.com)

COINS, MEDALS, BANK NOTES  
Written by private collector.

Telephone 01920 676540.

READERS ARE ADVISED to care-  
fully consider all of their options  
before agreeing to the sale of any of  
their items.

### t.v. / home entertainment

### service

AERIAL AND TV SPECIALIST  
TV Repair, Plasma, LED, LCD,  
CCTV, Cameras supplied & fitted.

Any area. Free Estimates, 7 days.

Digital aerials, Sky installation, Wall

mounts / TV setups. 07850 330251.

### specialists at your service

### building supplies

QUALITY DOORS AND HARD-  
WOOD FLOORING @ low prices.

### aerials

ClassifiedAds  
BUY LOCAL, SELL LOCAL

CLASSIFIEDS  
HELPED  
ME...

I am very pleased

with the response

I get from my

Classified

Advertising

Contract

Steve -

AA Digital Adverts

FOR GREAT BUSINESS  
RESULTS CALL

01902 319 191

Brought to you by Express & Star

CLASSIFIEDS  
HELPED  
ME...

Thanks to our

Classified advertising

in the Express & Star

we are really busy!

It definitely

works for us!

Grinsells Skip Hire.

FOR GREAT BUSINESS RESULTS CALL

01902 319 191

Brought to you by Express & Star

CLASSIFIEDS  
HELPED  
ME...

Thanks to our

Classified advertising

in the Express & Star

we are really busy!

It definitely

works for us!

Grinsells Skip Hire.

FOR GREAT BUSINESS RESULTS CALL

01902 319 191

Brought to you by Express & Star

CLASSIFIEDS  
HELPED  
ME...

Thanks to our

Classified advertising

in the Express & Star

we are really busy!

It definitely

works for us!

Grinsells Skip Hire.

FOR GREAT BUSINESS RESULTS CALL

01902 319 191

Brought to you by Express & Star

CLASSIFIEDS  
HELPED  
ME...

Thanks to our

Classified advertising

in the Express & Star

we are really busy!

It definitely

works for us!

Grinsells Skip Hire.

FOR GREAT BUSINESS RESULTS CALL

01902 319 191

Brought to you by Express & Star

CLASSIFIEDS  
HELPED  
ME...

Thanks to our

Classified advertising

in the Express & Star

we are really busy!

It definitely

works for us!

Grinsells Skip Hire.

FOR GREAT BUSINESS RESULTS CALL

01902 319 191

Brought to you by Express & Star

CLASSIFIEDS  
HELPED  
ME...

Thanks to our

Classified advertising

in the Express & Star

we are really busy!

It definitely

works for us!

Grinsells Skip Hire.

FOR GREAT BUSINESS RESULTS CALL

01902 319 191

Brought to you by Express & Star

CLASSIFIEDS  
HELPED  
ME...

Thanks to our

Classified advertising

in the Express & Star

we are really busy!

It definitely

works for us!

Grinsells Skip Hire.

FOR GREAT BUSINESS RESULTS CALL

01902 319 191

Brought to you by Express & Star

CLASSIFIEDS  
HELPED  
ME...

Thanks to our

Classified advertising

in the Express & Star

we are really busy!

It definitely

works for us!

Grinsells Skip Hire.

FOR GREAT BUSINESS RESULTS CALL

01902 319 191

Brought to you by Express & Star

CLASSIFIEDS  
HELPED  
ME...

Thanks to our

Classified advertising

in the Express & Star

we are really busy!

It definitely

works for us!

Grinsells Skip Hire.

FOR GREAT BUSINESS RESULTS CALL

01902 319 191

Brought to you by Express & Star

CLASSIFIEDS  
HELPED  
ME...

Thanks to our

Classified advertising

in the Express & Star

we are really busy!

It definitely

works for us!

Grinsells Skip Hire.

properties wanted

## Classified Ads BUY LOCAL, SELL LOCAL

CLASSIFIEDS  
HELPED  
ME...

We have been advertising in the Express & Star and Chronicles for over 20 years and consider it a key part of our business with the regular flow of calls, which our advertising generates.

Black Country Homes

FOR GREAT BUSINESS RESULTS CALL 01902 319 191 Brought to you by Express &amp; Star

Home Cash Buyer  
Houses / Land RequiredRing Paul 24/7 Local 07870 341 089  
Sandwell area: Call 0121 696 4154  
Walsall & Cannock area: Call 01922 432049  
Wolverhampton: Call 01902 489901  
[www.homecashbuyer.co.uk](http://www.homecashbuyer.co.uk)

## Classified Ads BUY LOCAL, SELL LOCAL

IT WORKS  
FOR ME

We have been advertising in the Express & Star and Chronicles for over 20 years and consider it a key part of our business with the regular flow of calls, which our advertising generates.

Black Country Homes

FOR GREAT BUSINESS RESULTS CALL 01902 319 191 Brought to you by Express &amp; Star

Need to sell your home fast?  
We can help you make a fresh startWith solutions to suit ...  
you can clear your debts and make a fresh start  
ALL CIRCUMSTANCES CONSIDERED  
COMPLETE ON DATE TO SUIT  
FREE VALUATION AND LEGALS  
FREE FRIENDLY ADVICE  
LOCAL COMPANY

## MARION | PROPERTY SOLUTIONS

WHY NOT CALL US TODAY  
for an informal, friendly and confidential chat?  
0121 405 0797 \*Terms and  
Conditions apply  
OUR LINES ARE OPEN 24/7

## Classified Ads BUY LOCAL, SELL LOCAL

CLASSIFIEDS  
HELPED  
ME...

"I am really pleased with the response I get from my Classified Advertising!"

Paul Westwood - Home Cash Buyer

FOR GREAT BUSINESS RESULTS CALL 01902 319 191 Brought to you by Express &amp; Star

## accommodation to let

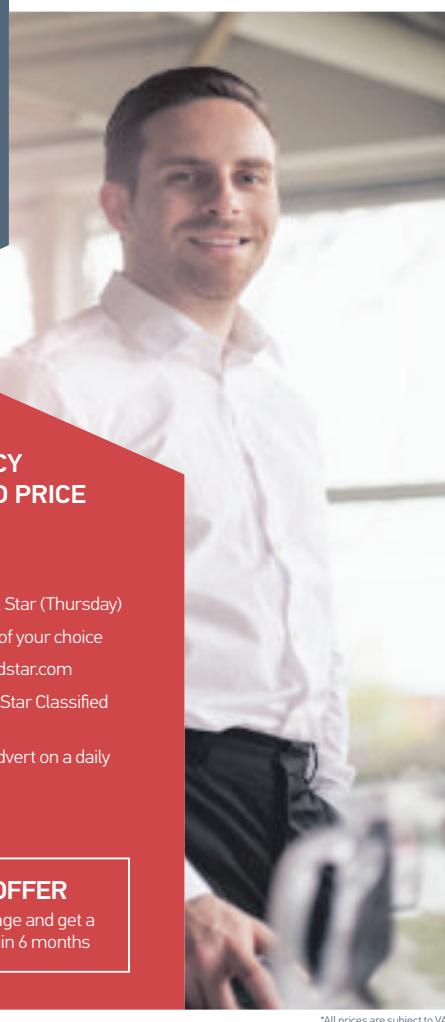
NOTICE TO READERS It is an offence under the Accommodation Agencies Act 1993, for an Agency to charge a fee simply for the registration of your requirements and/or supplying particulars of premises to let.

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

full time - general

MONDAY  
TUESDAY  
WEDNESDAY  
JOBS DAY[jobs.expressandstar.com](http://jobs.expressandstar.com)  
REAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOU

Express &amp; Star

FIXED PRICE  
RECRUITMENT  
PACKAGEFILL YOUR NEXT VACANCY  
WITH OUR BRONZE FIXED PRICE  
RECRUITMENT PACKAGE

Bronze package includes:

- 5cm x 2 column advert in Express & Star (Thursday)
- 5cm x 2 column advert in Chronicle of your choice
- Two week listing on [jobs.expressandstar.com](http://jobs.expressandstar.com)
- 5 line advert to appear in Express & Star Classified jobs for 5 nights
- We will run the lineage and online advert on a daily basis until you fill the vacancy

Package Price £399\*

## JANUARY SPECIAL OFFER

Book a January recruitment package and get a second package at half price within 6 months

## 8 Motoring

cars over £1500

MUST BE SEEN  
HYUNDAI TUCSON CRTD  
CDX 2.0

2004, 79,000 miles, MoT December 2017, full leather, very good condition, some service history.

£2,600 o.n.o.

07841 836074.

## AUTOMATIC

SUZUKI ALTO (NEW SHAPE) 1.0 AUTOMATIC

2009, 24,000 miles, only 1 previous owner, both keys, books, etc, beautiful inside and out, faultless driver, any trial.

£2,500 o.n.o.

Telephone 07800 637961 (Wolverhampton).

cars under £1500

## ADVERTISERS ARE REMINDED

that the Business Advertisements (Disclosure) Order of 1977 requires that advertisements must clearly differentiate between Private and Trade.

## CITROEN SAXO DESIRE 1.1

2003, 110,940 miles, silver, abs, electric windows, air bag, MoT, central locking, pas, sunroof, stereo, full service, new tyres and exhaust.

£450.

07858 232769.

FIAT PANDA 06 reg, full MoT, very good condition, excellent runner. £700 o.n.o. 07810 590427.

## BARGAIN

MAZDA 6 SALOON

56 reg.

Spares or repair.

Best offer around £250.

07850 742388.

## GOOD RUNNER

ROVER 25

04 reg, red, economical. 12 months MoT, sunroof, CD, new clutch.

Very good condition.

£550 o.n.o.

Telephone 07503 748161.

## BARGAIN

VAUXHALL VECTRA 2.0 16V  
CDX AUTOMATIC

Electric windows all round, multi CD player, ABS, MoT July, R Reg, Spares or repairs. £200 o.n.o.

01902 689071.

## classic cars

WANTED, CLASSIC Cars. Private cash buyer. Instant cash settlement. Any age. Any condition. 01630 652993 or 07773 462797.

## driving tuition

 Homer's  
10 Hours £125! Four Hours £40!  
2 Hours £20! All Areas Covered  
ADIP/REPSA Approved Instructors for £10  
07432 455100 / 01562 870096  
01984 234959 / 0121 5640909  
01902 580065 [www.homersdrivingschool.co.uk](http://www.homersdrivingschool.co.uk)

## scrap vehicles

OUR ADVERTISERS are reminded that it is an offence under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 to buy scrap cars/meta for cash.

## ABC AUTO SALVAGE WANTED URGENT

Scrap & MOT Failures Best Prices Paid ELV Registered Spares Always Available 0121 557 0800 or 0121 557 0400 Oldbury Area.

## vehicles wanted

alan reed cars  
Used cars wanted for cash. Top prices paid. HP settled. Buyer could call. 01562 711083 / 07831 245313  
CROWN MOTORS guarantee best price for your unwanted cars/vans. 07903 549849, buyer will call.

## 9 Local Information

## public &amp; legal notices

LEGAL / PUBLIC NOTICES  
For convenience you may fax any advertising requirements to Marie Hogg on 01902 713146 or email [marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk](mailto:marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk) (remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

## 10 Personals

## personal

Start the NEW YEAR with a new adventure and someone to open presents with next Christmas, let your resolution be to take a chance on love. For more information ring Attitude 0121 520 3715

A 50 YEAR OLD INDIAN MAN  
Would like to meet lady for holidays, visits to wine bars, between 30-40 years old. All letters answered.

Please write to: Box Number P20654, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

## general

I AM LOOKING FOR MY SON  
Mr A. Lewis.  
Last seen Wolverhampton.  
Please get in touch, Box Number P20647, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

BUY LOCAL SELL LOCAL  
01902 317878

WE CAN HELP YOU FIND  
YOUR PERFECT JOB!  
• CV UPLOAD  
• JOB ALERTS  
• CV MATCHING

# New Ignis offers funky, good to drive small car

By Jon Reay

It's been nearly 10 years since the last of the previous generation Ignis rolled out of Suzuki's UK showrooms, and what a difference a decade has made.

While the old car managed to whip up a decent number of loyal customers over the seven years it was on sale, it'd be fair to say that it was a dull-but-worthy creation – well priced and equipped, but hardly the first word in desirability.

Suzuki is hoping that this distinctive-looking new car can succeed where the old car didn't, and provide a properly desirable alternative to European rivals.

On looks alone, the Ignis is off to a cracking start already and manages to pull off the chunky-yet-cute vibe very well indeed. There's no doubt it's a small car, but thanks to a squat stance and puffed-out wheel arches, it looks far more miniature-crossover than jumped-up city car – particularly compared to its rivals.

The interior is similarly impressive. Materials are what you'd expect from a Japanese city car – which is to say general hard to the touch and a bit flimsy here and there – but all the crucial elements like door handles and electric window switches feel pretty solid.

More importantly, the design is spot on, with brightly-coloured details and a two-tone dashboard lifting the ambience inside the Ignis considerably.



Boot space isn't huge but it's adequate

The Ignis is a comparatively tiny car but practicality is still surprisingly good. All cars get five doors, and rear passengers will find a surprising amount of head and leg room – enough for two adults to sit comfortably, particularly on SZ-T and SZ5 cars with their sliding rear seats.

Boot space isn't huge by any means at 260 litres with seats in position, but that's only 10 litres behind the larger Ka+'s. Selecting the optional four-wheel-drive system will knock that back to 204, however, and it's worth bearing in mind that only the entry-level SZ3 trim can seat five.

Safety is relatively good too, with the Ignis boasting a five star EuroNCAP rating for models equipped with Dual Camera Brake Support. Models without the feature get a three star rating, however.

There's just the one engine option: a 1.2-litre four-cylinder petrol borrowed from the Swift. It's not as perky as the 1.0-litre turbocharged 'Boosterjet' unit you'll find in the Baleno, but it's more than enough to propel the sub-one tonne Ignis along with ease. As in the Swift, it needs some revving to really get going, but if anything that adds to the Ignis's honest appeal.

Some cars get an SHVS 'mild' hybrid system too – effectively a way of regenerating the power used when you brake. Fitting this not only improves the Ignis's fuel economy a smidge, but knocks a few fractions of a second off the 0-60mph figure too.

You sit deliberately high in the Ignis, so visibility from the front and sides is excellent and jumping in and out is an ease. The steering wheel adjusts for rake but not reach, though it's still easy to get comfortable. Buttons and switches are logically laid out in front of you too, and although the touch screen navigation system isn't the most responsive around, it's easy enough to use.

The Ignis has been set up for comfort rather than sportiness – and that seems about right for a car of this type. Ride quality is good even on the larger 16-inch alloys, and things are remarkably stable on motorways.

Take things off the beaten path and things are similarly impressive. The Ignis's optional four-wheel-drive system isn't a particularly sophisticated one, but should be more than enough to get it across a muddy field with ease.

It's hard to fault the Ignis on value for money – even entry-level SZ3 cars get plenty of toys. Air conditioning, front electric windows and a DAB radio with USB and Bluetooth connectivity are all thrown in.

When you consider that barely any other cars at this price can be fitted with four-wheel-drive too, the Ignis makes all the more sense – despite the fact that it's only available as an option on the top-spec SZ5 trim level.

Priced from £11,000.



On looks alone, the Ignis is off to a cracking start

There are car sales events, and there is the

## T.Wall Vauxhall Massive Christmas & New Year SALE **NOW ON!**

The West Midlands' BIGGEST New & Used Vauxhall Sale Event

SAVE UP TO £1500 ON HUNDREDS OF USED CARS IN STOCK

15/15 VAUXHALL  
**CORSA**  
EXCITE 1.4 A/C 5dr  
Blue, 6,250 miles



WAS £8995  
NOW £8495  
SAVE £500

15/15 VAUXHALL  
**ASTRA VXR**  
2.0T 240PS 3dr  
Black, 24,500 miles



WAS £17995  
NOW £16495  
SAVE £1500

14/14 VAUXHALL  
**MOKKA**  
SE 1.7 CDTi 5dr  
Orange Rock, 33,200 miles



WAS £12995  
NOW £11995  
SAVE £1000

### PRE-REG VAUXHALL SALE

Massive Savings on Pre Reg, Delivery Mileage Vauxhalls  
Special Drive-Away Prices. SAVE ££££s OFF RRP

**STOP PRESS: 22% OFF NEW VAUXHALLS-STARTS 27th DECEMBER**

Ts & Cs apply

**T Wall Vauxhall** [www.twall.co.uk](http://www.twall.co.uk)

High Street, Pensnett, Kingswinford. Tel: 01384 288333

All offers subject to stock availability, terms and conditions, pictures for illustration purposes only.



VAUXHALL

# Most extreme school run for Kodiaq

British parents spend almost nine weeks of their lives ferrying kids to and from the school gates, according to new research from Škoda. And for many – over a third (36 per cent) of UK mums and dads – the 'school run' is the most stressful parental duty that they undertake.

However, whilst traffic (64 per cent) is the most common obstacle facing people on their daily commute, spare a thought for those living in the most remote parts of the UK. According to Škoda's study, in the furthest flung places such as the Scottish Highlands and Welsh Valleys, delays to school runs caused by hazards such as flooding rise by as much as 18 per cent against the national average (56 per cent vs 38 per cent).

Livestock on the roads also causes issues. In the county of Sutherland in the far north of Scotland, and in the mid Wales county of Ceredigion, an average of one in ten parents regularly has to stop to bypass rogue sheep and cattle – almost twice as often as any other rural location.

On the back of these figures, Škoda sought out the country's 'most extreme school run' – a nationwide search for the family facing the toughest terrain and obstacles – to put its brand new large SUV, the Kodiaq, through its paces in the UK for the first time.

Step forward the Joneses, a farming family based in Pontrhydfendigaid, Ceredigion, Wales.

Nestled amongst stunning picture-postcard scenery, the Jones' land even features its own waterfall. However, despite beautiful appearances, their location also offers up problematic driving obstacles than cause



The children really enjoyed travelling in the Kodiaq



Part of the extreme run the Jones family has to make to get the children to school

the family delays of anywhere between ten minutes and two hours.

Dad William often has to use his chainsaw to help remove fallen trees, whilst ice and floods also present regular challenges – with a broken-down lorry blocking the road for two solid days last year. The Jones' cottage, Cwmmoro, sits within its own micro-climate, meaning it can be snowing at home when it is raining at the children's school.

Mum Sarah Jones explained: "Every day

when we wake up we don't know what we're going to come up against on our school run, which is part of the fun of living up here really. We could take our horse Willow, but a 4x4 makes things so much easier."

Prior to its secretive arrival in Wales from the Czech Republic, the seven-seater Škoda Kodiaq had completed over a million miles of testing in some of the most extreme climates around the world. In what was a typically wet and windy day in Pontrhydfendigaid,

that testing was the perfect preparation. The Joneses got to experience the Kodiaq's outstanding 4x4 functionality, cutting across the valley via a slippery off-road route that features lots of mud and water crossings.

Sarah Jones concluded: "We were hugely impressed with the Kodiaq and our journey to school was the smoothest we've ever experienced. It tackled flooded areas and hills with ease and we enjoyed the headroom and nice little extras such as the heated seats. The

seven seats would definitely come in handy for collecting our children's school mates and when they're not being used, we can pop our dogs in the back. The kids really want us to buy one now!"

Watch the Jones' extreme school run here: [skoda.uk/ExtremeSchoolRun](http://skoda.uk/ExtremeSchoolRun)

Škoda's first seven-seater SUV will start from just £21,495 and will be available in four trim levels with five engine options, two and four-wheel drive, and manual or DSG gearboxes.

**HALESOWEN MOTOR HOUSE**

# SALE

**STARTS 27TH DECEMBER**

MASSIVE SAVINGS AVAILABLE  
ON HUNDREDS OF CARS

**DON'T MISS OUT!!**

**Halesowen Motor House**

Dudley Rd, Halesowen, West Midlands B63 3NH. Tel: 0121 503 0001  
[www.halesowenmotorhouse.co.uk](http://www.halesowenmotorhouse.co.uk)

**VIRTUAL**

**Express & Star**

# MOTORSHOW

KEEP UP TO DATE WITH THE  
LATEST MANUFACTURER  
& DEALER OFFERS  
BY VISITING  
OUR SHOW...

**REVIEW YOUR NEW  
CAR BY VIDEO BEFORE  
YOU TEST DRIVE!**

DRIVING EXPERIENCE - COST OF OWNERSHIP - DESIGN & BUILD - RANGE

**> VIDEO REVIEWS > DEALERSHIP INFORMATION**



[expressandstar.com/drivetime](http://expressandstar.com/drivetime)



Connor Newell, aged 14 from Willenhall, practises in the water



Young club member Jaden Davies, aged seven



Chloe Hall, aged 12, gets to work in the pool



Swimming club members are now making a big splash

# Swimming club hoping for new wave of interest

## SPORTING FEATURE

By Lewis Cox

HEATH Town Swimming Club boast a long and illustrious history – and are now appealing for ‘fresh blood’ in a bid to keep the club afloat.

The ASA-affiliated outfit have been a registered club for 83 years, and several of their volunteers and have been involved for around half of that time.

They have seen good and bad times, riding the wave of great highs and plunging to the depths of difficult lows.

One of those lows arrived when their home – Bushbury Swimming Baths in Wolverhampton – was forced to close in November 2006.

Numbers dwindled but, thanks to a few hardy souls that kept the club going at other baths, the Heath Town club lived on.

“I think we were down to just 16 swimmers at that time,” said Sheila Ratcliffe, aged 69, a former welfare officer and now assistant coach at the club.

### Important

“Keeping it running was so important because once a club folds then it’s very difficult to get it started back up again.”

It was the dedication of Ratcliffe and the committee that helped keep the club afloat.

They moved on to Wolverhampton Swimming and Fitness Centre shortly after and began building from the bottom again.

Ratcliffe, who has been helping out for 42 years, estimates there are around 200 members now connected with the club. But while that sounds impressive, she warns many of those are non-swimmers and some do not attend regularly.

They train on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday evenings and use both the larger and smaller pool at the facility. “Numbers dwindle with kids in the sum-



Heath Town Swimming Club coach Rob Bonner at Wolverhampton Swimming & Fitness Centre

**“Keeping it running was so important because once a club folds then it’s very difficult to get it started back up again.”**

mer holidays but we expect that,” she said. “We need about 35 in the big pool and 20 in the little pool to pay the centre, it’s quite expensive.

“We cater for beginners and improvers and then we go into the big pool where we train with six lanes – our head coach Rob Bonner is a Level Two coach.”

Like Ratcliffe, Bonner’s association with the club began as merely ‘parent’. Taking their children along to learn how to swim quickly turned into a hobby and a passion.

But Ratcliffe, originally from Wednesfield but who now lives in Willenhall, reflects the will to volunteer at a sports club is not what it once was. “We’ve adver-

tised for new volunteers or coaches – that we’d happily pay – to help keep our club going but people have too many other things to do these days,” she said.

“It’s not like it used to be. We also have Margaret Bennion, Alan Robinson and Joan Jarvis help out as volunteer coaches and they’ve been doing it nearly as long as me.

“The president, secretary and treasurer are all here but we’re all getting on and we need youngsters to step in, we need fresh blood.”

Club president is Ray Green, awarded the MBE four years ago for services to schools and swimming. His wife Sheila is secretary and Malcolm Foley – who used to swim with Ratcliffe’s daughter Wendy – is treasurer. “You can see how it is, we’ve all been here for a while and we love it and enjoy it but it is difficult,” Ratcliffe conceded.

“I never thought I’d be here all these decades later after bringing my children. If it wasn’t for my youngest grandson Connor coming to swim I might not have still been involved. But looking at it, it’s my passion and my hobby. We’ve been associated for so long, we just do it for the love.”



Sheila Ratcliffe with juniors Gracie Harrigan aged six, Zak Davis, seven, Jaden Davis and Lexie Davis, eight



Sheila Ratcliffe, president Ray Green MBE and coach Rob Bonner with club youngsters

SPORTS DESK 01902 319531

Making big splash to attract new recruits

Page 35



CHRON.SPORT@EXPRESSANDSTAR.CO.UK

Late free-kick earns a point for Glassboys

#### Stourbridge 1 Spennymoor 1

A 97th-minute free-kick from substitute Drew Canavan rescued an Evo-Stik Premier Division point for FA Cup heroes Stourbridge.

Glassboys keeper Matt Gould pulled off a string of good saves to ensure the first half ended goalless.

He denied David Dowson with an excellent stop and then dived bravely at the feet of Jamie Chandler after the diminutive midfielder had danced his way into the area.

The Glassboys rarely threatened before the interval but went close to breaking the deadlock five minutes into the second half when Dan Scarr's header from a corner was cleared off the line. But it was Spennymoor who opened the scoring on 59 minutes when Gould was finally beaten by Mark Anderson's looping header.

Luke Benbow, another shining light for the home side, twice went close to equalising as Stourbridge finished the stronger but it was left to Canavan to level deep into injury time.

Assistant boss Jon Ford described his side's performance as a little 'after the Lord Mayor's Show', but felt they deserved their point.

That result leaves Stourbridge ninth in the table, four points behind the last of the play-off positions, currently occupied by Huddersfield Town.

Ford said: "We'd been knocking at the door for a while and had a few opportunities, so I thought it was a just reward. 'Spennymoor are a very good side. You can see why they're up there and their recent form has been good."

"It was a bit after the Lord Mayor's Show but, following all the events of Tuesday night, we've managed to come away with a point against a very good side so we're pleased with that."

**Crowd played big part in cup success, reveals hero Gater**

STOURBRIDGE midfielder Connor Gater has revealed just how important the fans were in their FA Cup success against Northampton.

The Evo-Stik League Premier Division side pulled off a spectacular win against their League One opponents, taking them through to the third round of the FA Cup for the first time in the club's history thanks to Jack Duggan's dramatic winner.

Stourbridge now face League Two Wycombe on January 7. And Gater, who came on as a second-half substitute, praised the fans, as well as his personal friends and family, who roared the team to victory. "There's no greater feeling than playing for all your friends and family in the crowd," he said.

"They didn't disappoint, the fans were incredible, the adrenaline is great with the atmosphere like that."

He also revealed his pride at playing for his home town club: "It was a great feeling coming off the bench and playing for my home town club, with a great group of lads that made it happen, I'm proud of the way they played."

## Six of the best in DK winning run

#### Whitchurch 10 DK 16

DK hit back from a 10-0 half-time deficit to extend their winning run to six games, the best current winning sequence in Midlands One West.

In the process, DK recorded their first double of the season.

In front of a good crowd, boosted by a good contingent of the Heathbrook faithful, Whitchurch started better, and were 5-0 up when a missed tackle on full-back Tom Davies led to the opening try.

DK came under a period of pressure again and with so many defensive situations the referee de-

#### Rugby

cided John McGregor had infringed once too often and it was worthy of a yellow card. During the ensuing 10 minutes the DK defence cracked again and conceded another try.

For DK half-time was the turning point, whatever was said certainly worked in the next 40 minutes.

DK lost scrum half Joe Mullock to a serious-looking arm injury. But, from a penalty into the corner, the lineout, catch and drive led to Luke Greenwood crossing the line. George In-

gram was unable to add the extras. Nic Adams soon restored parity, though. This time Tommy Higgins took the kick, but put it wide. The same player did, however, add two penalties to give DK the win.

#### Stourbridge 26 Luctonians 5

STOUR took their time to pull clear of the determined but ultimately outgunned challenge of their Herefordshire visitors.

Dan Rundle scored the opening try, with one from No 8 Ciaran Moore and a brace from Joe Hebron, including the bonus point fourth try.

Stourton Park hosts the traditional fixtures with DK on Boxing Day, 11am kick off.

# FESTIVE POINTS WRAPPED UP

Old Halesonians 39 Longton 6

**THERE was a festive feel to this game as an expectant home crowd hoped for a repeat of the previous week's victory at Derby.**

The home side saw a change with skipper Steve Leach replacing injured Ben Barkley in the centres with Colt Kieran Haynes starting in the back row and second row Jamie Powell on the bench.

They got off to a great start with a try after just five minutes thanks to a brilliant individual try from Chris Danks.

From the restart, Hales again attacked. Longton were penalised in their 22 and full-back Ian Briggs converted for an 8-0 lead.

On 13 minutes it was 15-0, with Danks scoring his second try, converted by Briggs.

#### Extended

Longton forced two penalties to reduce the deficit, but they failed to trouble the scoreboard again and Hales extended their lead at the break with a Briggs kick.

The second half was only a minute old when Jay Reid touched down and Briggs converted. Chris Hooper scored the bonus point try, converted by Briggs and the scoring was completed by Luke Smith, Briggs again adding the extras.

Hales play Nuneaton away on Saturday January 7, kick off 2.15pm

**Old Hales 3rds 48 Kiddy 2nds 0**

OLD Hales started well and Dan Smith sprinted clear from 35m to touch down. Rhys Evans slotted over the conversion for an early 7-0 lead.

Old Hales got a grip on the game and from a maul deep in the 22, Tony Shaw broke free to go over for a try from short range.

Second half tries came from Steve Deakin, Jon Harris and Alex Church, with the latter being converted by Evans.

Harris scored a second well-worked try. Trojans added the conversion and a seventh try came from Harry Higgs.

The final score came from Church, converted by Evans.

## Plain sailing as duo strike gold



Halesowen's Crispin Beaumont, left, and Tom Darling celebrate. Credit: Sailing Energy

A HALESOWEN yachtsman clinched a gold medal at the Youth Sailing World Championship.

Crispin Beaumont, together with Hayling Island's Tom Darling clinched dramatic first place in the 29er Boys' in their final race in the 29er. Beaumont said: "We feel pretty good."

The 18-year-old pair went in to Tuesday's sole race just four points behind Gwendal Nael and Lillian Mercier knowing the title would be theirs if they could keep enough boats between themselves and their French rivals.

Beaumont and Darling finished the race in third to leapfrog the French pair - who finished 10th in the race - to the top of the podium, add-

ing the Youth Sailing World Championships gold to the 29er class Worlds bronze they won this summer and last year's Europeans silver.

This was Beaumont and Darling's last event in the 29er. Beaumont said: "We feel pretty good."

"It is really nice to end our partnership winning the big one. It is a great feeling. I have been known to bottle it a few times on the last day! But today I kept my cool and just enjoyed the moment."

More than 380 sailors from 65 nations battled it out across nine classes in Auckland, starting last Friday. Britain finish second in the Nations Trophy for top overall team.

**Greenwood makes return to Heathens**

DAN Greenwood is on his way back to Cradley - three years after leaving the club.

Greenwood won the league and cup double with the Heathens in 2013 but was squeezed out of team plans the following season.

He's since spent three seasons with Coventry and ended last season on the injured list, requiring surgery on his collarbone.

He has now agreed to be back with the nomadic Heathens, who will split home fixtures between Monmore Green and Perry Barr.

Greenwood said: "Even though I've been riding with Coventry I've never lost touch with the Cradley lads."

Heathens boss Will Pottinger said: "I'm sure he can do a good job for the team. I'm delighted with the way the team is coming together and everyone is looking forward to the new season."

Heathens have also snapped up Wear-side racer Ryan Burton.

The 23-year-old Sunderland-based rider joins Greenwood, skipper Tom Perry, Danny Ayres - who has joined from Kent - and Joe Lawlor in the 2017 team. Reserve duo Bradley Andrews and Ben Basford are free to speak to other teams, however.

And big-hitters Max Clegg and Ashley Morris are now firmly established SGB Championship riders who will figure for Edinburgh and Newcastle respectively.

Co-promoter Gary Patchett said: "It's never pleasant having to tell a rider that you can't accommodate him in your team. Both Max and Ash will be able to concentrate on progressing in the senior leagues and I'm sure the likes of Brad and Ben will find places elsewhere."

"They have all been a pleasure to deal with and we wish them, and all our former riders, the very best for 2017."

## Yeltz continue to slide down table

Coalville 3 Halesowen Town 1

HALESOWEN Town's poor form continued and they have now not won in four games, sliding to 19th in the Evo-Stik Premier.

They Yeltz produced a bright start and their pressure paid off when Kaiman Anderson gave them the lead with his 17th goal of the season on 21 minutes.

But Massiah McDonald equalised on 26 minutes when he neatly slotted the ball home.

Ryan Robbins bundled Coalville ahead on 74 minutes and - three minutes later - it was game over when Alex Dean curled home.

★★★ The Chronicle, a Midland News publication, printed by the company at Ketley, Telford.

Thursday, December 22, 2016

Bookings now being taken for Christmas

## THE ROWLEY BAR & GRILL

Tandoori Sizzlers | Mixed Grills | Curries | Steaks Now Available

NEW MENU  
NOW AVAILABLE



07932 634 531

47 HAWES LANE, B65 9AF,  
ROWLEY REGIS www.therowley.co.uk

FACEBOOK.COM/ROWLEYBARANDGRILL

THEROWLEYBAR

sky SPORTS

BT Sport



We take bookings for private parties from 2 to 50 people

Halesowen

# CHRONICLE

Thursday, December 22, 2016

INSIDE: YOUR REGULAR CHRONICLE



Read by more than 46,000 people

Price when sold 60p

ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

WINTER SALE  
EXTRA  
DISCOUNTS  
OFF ALL SALE PRICES

*For the start of  
the sale only*



Be early to take advantage of extra discounts off all sale prices, there's many one-off deals with limited stocks available.

Plus

Pay nothing until Summer, no deposit, interest free.



BIBA 4 SEATER SOFA  
(INCLUDING CUSHIONS)  
Normal £1099 | Sale £849

£749

At Cousins we've got a really big store full of little wonders...

SALE STARTS BOXING DAY 9am • BE EARLY FOR MANY ONE-OFF DEALS

Sofas. Carpets. Beds. Dining. Bedrooms. Lighting. Mirrors. Pictures. Cushions. Cookshop. Accessories. And much more.



ercol       



Stay connected with Cousins...



Like us on Facebook  
[www.facebook.com/CousinsFurniture](http://www.facebook.com/CousinsFurniture)



Follow us on Twitter  
[www.twitter.com/CousinsOnline](http://www.twitter.com/CousinsOnline)



Watch us on YouTube  
[www.youtube.com/CousinsFurnitureUK](http://www.youtube.com/CousinsFurnitureUK)

## Cousins WINTER SALE STARTS BOXING DAY 9am.

Be early to take advantage of extra discounts off all sale prices for the start of the sale only.

With huge reductions on every single item, there's never been a better time to save on furniture, carpets, beds, homewares and much more, including all the famous brand names.

Buy now and pay nothing until summer - not even a deposit - interest free.



**£449**  
**HEMINGWAY KING SIZE FABRIC BEDSTEAD**  
 Normal £699 | Sale £449



**£699**

JOANNA MARBLE DINING TABLE AND 4 CHAIRS  
 Normal £1499 | Sale £899



**£599**

REST ASSURED CASSIS 1400  
 POCKETED KING SIZE 4 DRAWER DIVAN  
 Normal £899 | Sale £699

**BEST SELLER**



Visit the Centre of Excellence in one of our Flagship stores to experience this exciting brand.



**£849**

OVATION CORNER GROUP  
 (INCLUDES CUSHIONS)  
 Normal £1399 | Sale £949

**IMMEDIATE DELIVERY**



**COMPLETE  
 THE  
 LOOK**

At Cousins you can accessorise every room in your home.

**£179**

LOUIS LEANER FULL LENGTH MIRROR (69"X 35")  
 Normal £349 | Sale £199

STARTS  
BOXING DAY 9am



Parker Knoll



MANOR HOUSE SOLID ASH  
DINING TABLE AND 4 CHAIRS  
Normal £1199 Sale £499



**MAMMOTH**  
TECHNOLOGIES  
The Ultimate  
Health Mattress  
Range



PLUS SPECIAL OFFERS

# WINTER SALE EXTRA DISCOUNTS OFF ALL SALE PRICES

*Starts Boxing  
Day 9am*

Extra discounts throughout the stores this  
Boxing Day - with many savings of 50% or more.

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| RADIUS swivel recliner chair and stool in grey and black         | NORMAL<br>£299<br>SALE<br>£179                                | <b>£149</b>                             |
| MAMMOTH Recliner sofas & chairs<br>25% OFF EVERYTHING            | Plus  | 3 SEATER FOR THE<br>PRICE OF A 2 SEATER |
| HEALY<br>Chaise sofa (includes cushions)                         | NORMAL<br>£699<br>SALE<br>£549                                | <b>£499</b>                             |
| BAYFIELD painted oak extending table and 4 chairs                | NORMAL<br>£1319<br>SALE<br>£899                               | <b>£599</b>                             |
| CAMBRIDGE Oak round dining table and 4 Rachael chairs            | NORMAL<br>£1299<br>SALE<br>£669                               | <b>£599</b>                             |
| SUSAN complete bedroom (bedstead, 2x bedside cabinets, wardrobe) | NORMAL<br>£999<br>SALE<br>£599                                | <b>£549</b>                             |
| MYERS Malvern Easycare double 4 drawer divan set                 | NORMAL<br>£699<br>SALE<br>£549                                | <b>£499</b>                             |
| AINSLIE<br>King size storage bedstead                            | NORMAL<br>£799<br>SALE<br>£599                                | <b>£549</b>                             |
| RUGS - assorted sizes, styles and colours                        | <b>60% OFF</b>  |   |
| COLUMBIA stain resistant carpet - choice of 20 colours           | NORMAL<br>£12.95m <sup>2</sup><br>SALE<br>£7.95m <sup>2</sup> | <b>£5.95m<sup>2</sup></b>               |
| DENBY<br>All remaining stock                                     | <b>50% OFF</b>  |   |

**Cousins**

a true family business

FREE CAR PARKING • INSTORE RESTAURANT  
LARGE STOCKS FOR IMMEDIATE DELIVERY

[www.cousinsfurniture.co.uk](http://www.cousinsfurniture.co.uk)

0% APR  
REPRESENTATIVE

Deferred Interest Free Credit available on all orders over £500. Subject to status. All balances must be paid in June 2017 on the date specified at the time of purchase. Written details on request. Offer not available on clearance items, online offers, web specials and in-store concessions. Some items are subject to one per household and only available in limited colours, or the colours shown in this advert. Prices in this advert are valid until 15.01.17 except where stated. See website for Price Promise details.

LOW SALE PRICES. PAY NOTHING  
UNTIL THE SUMMER.  
NO DEPOSIT. INTEREST FREE



RONSON 3 SEATER  
DOUBLE RECLINER SOFA  
Normal £949 | Sale £749



VISIT COUSINS EXTENSIVE  
CARPETS, FLOORING & RUGS  
DEPARTMENT



PRICE  
PROMISE

Our price promise  
to you, we won't be  
beaten on price! \*

CELEBRATING  
**31**  
YEARS

- Free parking
- Instore restaurant
- Large stocks
- Immediate delivery

